Brent—Bruce—Curry

ARGOSY

NRA CODE

PR. 6

ieorge
Challis
he Storm"
A new
rebrand
Story

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GET AFTER SORE THROAT WITH LISTERINE

Safe antiseptic brings quick relief, also fights colds. Kills bacteria in mouth and throat

Don't put up with the pain of ordinary sore throat. It can so often be quickly relieved by gargling with full strength Listerine, the safe antiseptic.

After this easy treatment, you will be delighted to find how much better your throat feels. That raw, burning, constricted sensation is gone.

Where the throat is seriously inflamed as the result of chronic infection of the tonsils, call a competent physician. Listerine can be of small help in such cases.

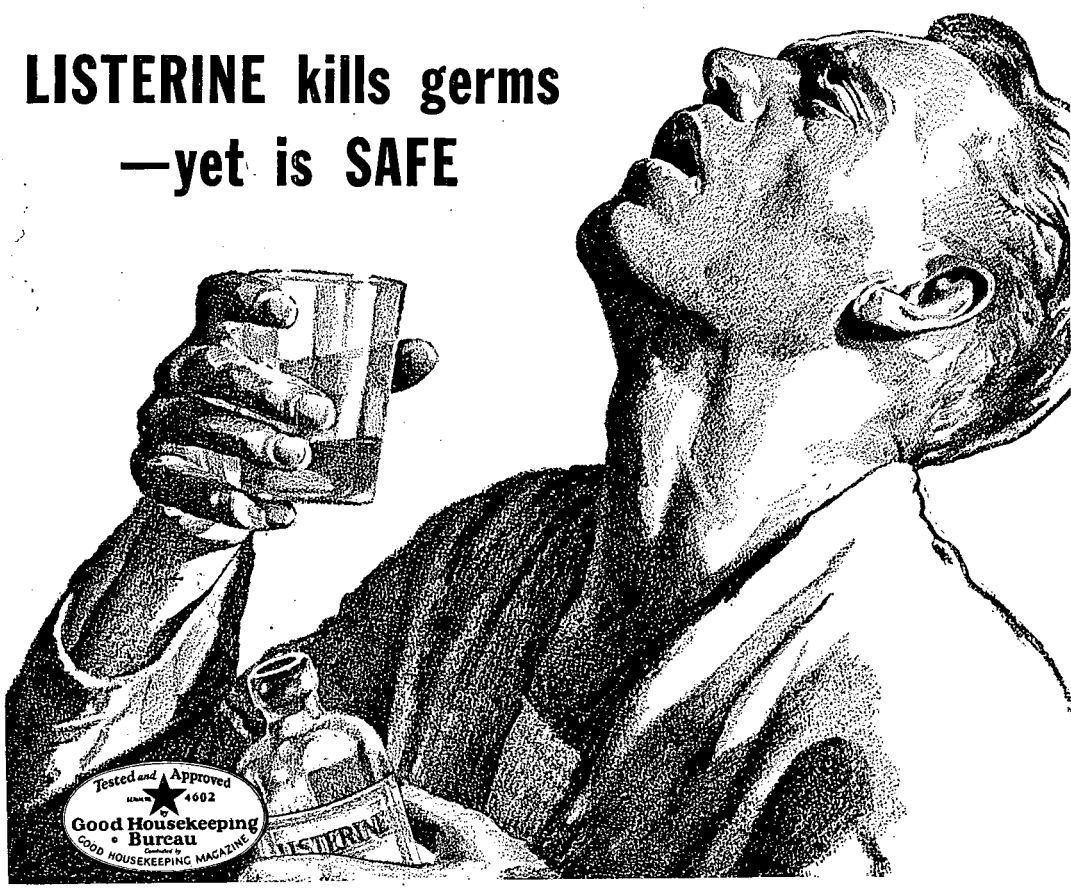
Fortunately for Mankind, however, most cases of sore throat are mild infections heralding the coming of a cold. Bacteria multiply in the throat, irritating its membranes, then move either upward into the nose, or downward to the bronchial tubes.

Doctors know, and you undoubtedly realize, the importance of keeping such bacteria under control—of killing as many as possible before they move to near-by tissues. You can see the advantage of using Listerine, notable for its germ-killing power. Reductions of bacteria in the mouth and throat ranging to 98.7% have been noted after the use of this safe antiseptic.

Even more interesting is this practical proof of Listerine's germ-killing ability: Those who gargled with Listerine twice a day caught *fewer* colds and *less severe* colds than those who did not gargle.

Listerine, to many, is that "ounce of prevention" so useful in combating Mankind's greatest nuisance and Mankind's greatest menace—the common cold. Keep a bottle of Listerine handy in home and office and use it systematically. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Mo.

LISTERINE kills germs —yet is SAFE



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUT JIM, I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN AFFORD TO MARRY.
MARY'S RIGHT. I REALLY CAN'T SUPPORT A WIFE.
GUESS I HAVEN'T A RIGHT TO ASK A GIRL LIKE MARY TO MARRY AN ORDINARY MECHANIC.
LOOK HERE, N.R.I. HAS TRAINED HUNDREDS OF MEN LIKE ME TO MAKE GOOD MONEY I GUESS I'LL GET THAT FREE BOOK
THIS IS SWELL FUN, AND I AM BEGINNING TO MAKE MONEY ON THE SIDE ALREADY. RADIO SURE IS FULL OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINED MEN.
YOU CERTAINLY KNOW RADIO. MINE NEVER SOUNDED BETTER
"THANKS" YOU SEE I HAVE TAKEN N.R.I. TRAINING
OH! JIM, IT'S WONDERFUL. NOW YOU'RE ON THE WAY TO SUCCESS
YES MARY, AND THERE'S A REAL FUTURE FOR US IN THIS RADIO FIELD.

I'LL TRAIN YOU AT HOME *In Your Spare Time For A* GOOD RADIO JOB

J. E. SMITH, President National Radio Institute

The man who has directed the Home-Study Training of more men for the Radio industry than any other man in America.

Mail the coupon now. Get the facts about Radio—the field with a future. N. R. I. training fits you for jobs in connection with the manufacture, sale and operation of Radio equipment. It fits you to go in business for yourself, service sets, operate on board ships, in broadcasting, television, aviation, police Radio and many other jobs. My FREE book tells how you quickly learn at home in spare time to be a Radio Expert.

Many Radio Experts Make $40, $60, $75 a Week

Why struggle along in a dull job with low pay and no future? Start training now for the live-wire Radio field. I have doubled and tripled salaries. Hundreds of successful men now in Radio got their start through N. R. I. training.

Many Make $5, $10, $15 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

Hold your job. I'll not only train you in a few hours of your spare time a week, but the day you enroll I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets which quickly show you how to do Radio repair jobs common in most every neighborhood. I give you Radio Equipment for conducting experiments and making tests that teach you to build and service practically every type of receiving set made. Cleo T. Retter, 30 W. Beechwood Ave., Dayton, Ohio, wrote: "Working only in spare time, I made about $1,500 while taking the Course."

Find Out What Radio Offers

My book has shown hundreds of fellows how to make more money and win success. It's FREE to any ambitious fellow over 15 years of age. Investigate. Find out what Radio offers you. Read what my Employment Department does to help you get into Radio after graduation, about my Money Back Agreement, and the many other N. R. I. features. Mail the coupon in an envelope, or paste it on a 1c. post card TODAY.

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 5DK
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

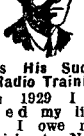
HERE'S PROOF that my training pays

Now Owns Own Business

"If I had not taken your Course I would be digging ditches instead of running my own business. One week I made $75 on repairing alone, and this doesn't count sales. If fellow wants to get into Radio, N. R. I. is the starting point." R. S. Lewis, Modern Radio Service, Pittsfield, Ill.

Spare Time Jobs Earn $15 a Week

"I have no trouble getting Radio work. I have the reputation of being the best Radio man in town, and average $15 to $20 a week for spare time only." G. Bernard Croy, 151 Washington St., Bronson, Michigan.



Owes His Success to Radio Training

"Since 1929 I have earned my living in Radio. I owe my last three jobs to N. R. I. I am now in the main control room of one of the large broadcasting chains." Serge A. Deinow, 1516 Library Ave., New York City.

MAIL THIS NOW

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 5DK
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send your book which points out the spare time and full time job opportunities in Radio and your 50-50 method of training men at home in spare time to become Radio Experts.

(Please print plainly)

NAME..... AGE.....

ADDRESS .....

CITY..... STATE.....

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARGOSY

NRA CODE

Action Stories of Every Variety

Volume 254 CONTENTS FOR APRIL 6, 1935 Number 5

NOVELETTES AND SHORT STORIES

Over the Dragon Wall (Long Novelette) . . . . . Loring Brent 36
Peter the Brazen confronts the jaws of a dragon

Hind Hide (Short Story) . . . . . H. H. Matteson 78
Justice is not blind in the Aleutians

Tomorrow We Die (Novelette) . . . . . George Bruce 88
With the U. S. Marines at Belleau Wood

Jungle Guillotine (Novelette) . . . . . Tom Curry 110
Revenge stalks Devil's Island

Men of Daring (True Story in Pictures) . . . . . Stookie Allen 122
Philip "Red" Mohun, flying soldier of fortune

The Lonely Killer (Short Story) . . . . . Anthony M. Rud 124
Two deadly jungle enemies fight it out

SERIALS

The Storm (Three Parts—Part I) . . . . . George Challis 4
Tizzo, the Firebrand, in a storm of steel

The Wild Man of Cape Cod (Six Parts—Part III) . Fred MacIsaac 129
Millionaire turns beach comber—for good reasons

OTHER FEATURES

Stopped by Locusts . . . . . J. W. Holden 35

Man Shot by Rabbit . . . . . Franklyn Powderly 87

Oriental Ring Champs . . . . . Delos White 108

Wonders of the World—No. 14 . . . . . Alfred George 109
"An enchanted cave in varying shades of blue"

Argonotes 142

Looking Ahead! 143

This magazine is on sale every Wednesday

THE FRANK A. MUNSEY COMPANY, Publisher 280 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

WILLIAM T. DEWART, President RICHARD H. TITHERINGTON, Secretary

MESSAGERIES HACHETTE
3, La Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4

PARIS: HACHETTE & CIE.
111 Rue Réaumur

Published weekly and copyright, 1935, by The Frank A. Munsey Company. Single copies, 10 cents. By the year, $4.00 in United States, its dependencies, Mexico and Cuba; $7.00 to Canada; $7.00 to other foreign countries. Remittances should be made by check, express money order or postal money order. Currency should not be sent unless registered. Entered as second class matter November 28, 1896, at the post office at New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879. The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright, and must not be reprinted without the publishers' permission. Title registered in U. S. Patent Office. Copyrighted in Great Britain.

Manuscripts submitted to this magazine should be accompanied by sufficient postage for their return if found unavailable. The publisher can accept no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two of the 46,000,000

WHEN we tell you that 46 million people bought Ex-Lax last year we aren't just bragging. And we aren't talking about ourselves . . . but about *you* and a problem of *yours!*

Here's why it is important to you. Occasionally you need a laxative to relieve constipation. You want the best relief you can get . . . thorough, pleasant, painless.

And when 46 million people find that one certain laxative gives them the best relief . . . well that laxative *must* be *good.* When 46 million people agree on *one* thing, there must be something about it that is different . . . and better.

Why America buys more Ex-Lax than any other laxative

Here are the reasons: People realize more and more how bad it is to blast the system with harsh laxatives. Ex-Lax is as thorough as any laxative you can take, yet it is *gentle.* Unlike harsh laxatives, it won't cause stomach pains, it won't upset you, it won't leave you feeling weak afterwards. People realize that habit-forming laxatives are bad. And they have found that Ex-Lax doesn't form a habit—you don't have to keep on increasing the dose to get results. People hate nasty-tasting medicines. Ex-Lax is a pleasure to take . . . for everybody likes the taste of delicious chocolate.

Ex-Lax comes in 10c and 25c boxes—at any drug store. If you would like a free sample, mail the coupon below.

• • •

COLD WAVE HERE... and we mean *colds.* Sneezing, sniffling, coughing, misery-creating colds. Guard against them this way: Get enough sleep, eat sensibly, dress warmly, keep out of drafts, keep your feet dry, and KEEP REGULAR . . . with Ex-Lax, the delicious chocolated laxative.

MAIL THIS COUPON—TODAY!

EX-LAX, Inc., P. O. Box 170
Times Plaza Station, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Y45 Please send free sample of Ex-Lax.

Name_____

Address_____

When Nature forgets—remember

EX-LAX

THE CHOCOLATED LAXATIVE

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified Advertising

The Purpose of this Department

is to put the reader in touch immediately with the newest needfuls for the home, office, farm, or person; to offer, or seek, an unusual business opportunity, or to suggest a service that may be performed satisfactorily through correspondence. It will pay a housewife or business man equally well to read these advertisements carefully.

Classified Advertising Rates in The Munsey Magazines

	Line Rate	
All-Story	$.50	Combination Line Rate $2.75 Less 2% cash discount
The Argosy Comb'n (The Argosy and Det. Fic. Weekly)	1.75	
Railroad Stories	.60	

Classified Advertising forms close on the first day of second month preceding publication.

10% discount allowed on six consecutive insertions. Discounts to be earned must be deducted from the sixth insertion.

AGENTS AND SALESMEN

SELL PROCESS EMBOSSED PRINTING $3.95 Thousand, with Free Cut Service. Worth $6.00. Nothing like it! Commission $1.00, advanced. Experience unnecessary. Outfit free. UNITED ENGRAVERS, R-6155 South State, Chicago.

MAKE MORE MONEY Taking Orders Shirts, Ties, Underwear, Dresses, Hosiery, Raincoats, Coveralls, Pants, Uniforms. OUTFIT FREE! NIMROD COMPANY, Department 55, 4922-28 Lincoln Avenue, Chicago.

SALESMAN-DISTRIBUTOR WITH CAR. SELL DRUG, HARDWARE, GARAGES, ETC. NEW TEN CENT ITEM. QUICK SELLER. SURE REPEATER. IDEAL FOR TRUCK JOBBERS. PEERLESS WATERPROOF CEMENT CO., 2744 DODIER ST., ST. LOUIS, MO.

SELL SANFORIZED SUMMER SUITS. NO COMPETITION. FREE OUTFIT. SUIT FURNISHED. BONUS. POPULAR STYLES $4.95 AND $2.00 COMMISSION AND UP. SERVICE, F-1615 N. DAMEN, CHICAGO.

BIG MONEY applying gold initials on automobiles. It's the easiest thing today. You make $1.45 profit on every $1.50 job. No experience needed. Free samples. RALCO, MY-1082 Washington, Boston, Mass.

AMBITIOUS MEN—Make $5 Cash Profit Each $6 Sale. No cold calls necessary. We furnish prospects. Choice territories open. Sales kit FREE. Write C. I. Link, Pres., 638 Central Savings Bank Bldg., Denver, Colo.

MAGNETIC CLEANER—Entirely new. More effective than a vacuum cleaner. Sells for $1.75. Make from $5.00 to $12.00 a day. F. S. Beveridge, Pres., Stanley Home Products, Inc., Box 435-M, Westfield, Mass.

SALESMEN—Acquainted with auto dealers, garages, filling stations, industrial concerns, truck and fleet owners. Big Profits. Leads furnished. Territory now available. Attractive set-up for Salesmen and district managers. Write Colgra, 2652 N. Third St., Milwaukee, Wis.

TEA AND COFFEE ROUTES OPEN. PAY UP TO $42.50 A WEEK. I FURNISH EVERYTHING YOU NEED. NO CAPITAL REQUIRED. WRITE ALBERT MILLS, 9005 MONMOUTH, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

DO YOU WANT AGENTS AND SALESMEN TO SELL YOUR MERCHANDISE? Men and women who are educated in personal salesmanship and know the house-to-house, office and store canvassing proposition. These advertisers are getting them year in and year out, and there are thousands more for you among the readers of the Munsey Magazines. Our Classified Service Bureau will gladly show you how to use this section most profitably and at the least cost. Write to-day to the CLASSIFIED MANAGER, MUNSEY COMBINATION, 280 Broadway, New York

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

USED CORRESPONDENCE COURSES and books sold or rented. Inexpensive. Money back agreement. Write for free catalog 4,000 bargains. (Courses bought.) Lee Mountain, Dept. M-14, Pisgah, Ala.

ASTROLOGY

Your 1935 Astrological Reading, a daily guide in your affairs covering business matters, change, travel, vocation, speculation, bonds, stocks, love, courtship, marriage, health, accidents, days when to and when not to sell, lucky and unlucky days—a 16-page book. Send name, birthdate, and $1.00 to Prince Eriel Kerma, Popular Radio Astrologer, K.Q.V., W.G.M., K.F.R.U. and others. 956 Madison Ave., Memphis, Tenn.

DETECTIVES

WANTED: Men and women to study detective profession, secret service, military and naval intelligence. Write Joseph Kavanagh, Former Agent United States Secret Service, MC-45, Hoboken, N. J.

INSTRUCTION

GOVERNMENT JOBS. Start $105-$175 month. Men—women, 18-50. Qualify now for coming examinations. Experience unnecessary. Full particulars—list positions, FREE. Write today. FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, Dept. P1, Rochester, N. Y.

MANUSCRIPTS WANTED

THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS being paid for stories, poems, plays, songs. Free Copyright in your own name. Free submission to publishers. Submit Mss. to Mark Twain Writers', Dept. A, Springfield, Ill.

OLD GOLD AND DIAMONDS

WANTED—OLD GOLD, DIAMONDS

MAIL us your old gold teeth—old or broken jewelry—antiques—watches—diamonds—silver. Cash by return mail. Goods returned in 10 days if you're not satisfied.
OHIO SMELTING CO., INC.,
315-A Hippodrome Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio.

PERSONAL

WE PAY UP TO $2000.00 EACH for old coins; $50.00 for pennies. Send 10 cents for catalog. CHICAGO COIN MART, 323-L South Franklin, Chicago.

PATENTS AND INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS COMMERCIALIZED. Patented or unpatented. Send sketch and description or model, or write for information. In business 30 years. Complete facilities. Adam Fisher Company, 249 Enright, St. Louis, Mo.

BE A RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTOR

A FIELD WHERE PAY ADVANCES ARE RAPID TRAINED MEN—19 to 50—wanted as **Railway and Bus Passenger Traffic Inspectors.** Healthful, fascinating work; travel or stay near home. Complete our few weeks' home-study course and we will place you at up to $140 per month, plus expenses, to start, **or refund tuition.** Experience brings rapid advancement. Help yourself to a real career. Write **STANDARD BUSINESS TRAINING INSTITUTE, Div. 5004, Buffalo, N. Y.**

GIVEN SPORT WATCH

Perfect time keeper. Long tonneau shape, chrome finish engraved case. Newest linked wrist band. **It's a Dandy.** Send for two 27 packet collections of Garden Seeds. Sell at 10c a pack. Remit money collected, then watch is yours. *Positively No Extra Money to Pay.* **SEND NO MONEY NOW.** Just name and address. Extra—$100. in BIG PRIZES. You may win. Write for seeds today. *A Post Card will do.* **We Trust You.**
LANCASTER COUNTY SEED CO. Sta. 393 PARADISE, PA.

In answering any advertisement on this page it is desirable that you mention this magazine.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

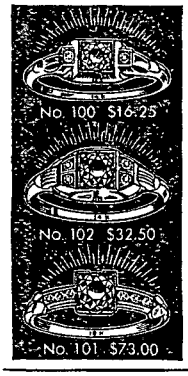
Sick Kidneys need this healing oil

Just as oils and ointments relieve burns, so does the santalwood oil in Santal Midy soothe and relieve irritations of kidneys and bladder. Santal Midy for nearly 100 years has given relief to such symptoms of bladder and kidney disorders as painful joints, headaches, backaches, and getting up nights. Santal Midy costs a few cents more than harsh pills or drugs—but the mildness, safety and comfort you get is well worth it. Any druggist can supply you.

Don't Neglect BACK ACHES

SANTAL MIDY
for the KIDNEYS and BLADDER

GENUINE BLUE WHITE DIAMONDS



Dazzlingly beautiful rings with certified genuine blue-white diamonds. Amazingly low priced. Set in 14 and 18 kt. solid white gold mountings with fine quality diamonds on sides.

Buy for Cash and Save

When buying for cash there is but one transaction, therefore but one profit. This substantial saving is passed on to our customers. Send ring size and $1.00 with order *and pay balance on receiving ring.* If you are not entirely satisfied within 10 days, return ring and your money will be refunded. On Fifth Avenue for 22 years.

WOODLEY DIAMOND CO.
Suite 902, 681 Fifth Ave.
New York City, New York
Bank references furnished if desired

BECOME AN EXPERT

ACCOUNTANT

Executive Accountants and C. P. A.'s earn $3,000 to $15,000 a year. Thousands more are needed. We train you thoroughly at home in spare time for C. P. A. examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous bookkeeping knowledge or experience unnecessary. Training given by C. P. A.'s. Write for free book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays," and learn about opportunities in this growing, profitable field.

LaSalle Extension University, Dept. 458-H, Chicago
The School That Has Trained Over 1,200 C. P. A.'s

We Buy PENNIES

MANY OLD COINS WORTH A FORTUNE
Get Posted

Top Prices Paid For All Rare Coins, Including Pennies. Join our club and receive reliable information on the value of coins. We Buy for cash all old coins in demand. Send 2 dimes for Complete Buying Catalog and membership card entitling you to club privileges. Mail 20c. today.
RELIABLE COIN MARKET
700 E. 63rd St., Dept. CF-2, Chicago, Ill.

RAILROAD STORIES

A MAGAZINE ABOUT RAILROADING THAT APPEALS TO EVERYONE!

Now 15c a Copy *(20c in Canada)* *At All News-stands.*

Writers are made ... NOT BORN

UNDER competent and sympathetic guidance, thousands of people of no more than average native ability have been developed into successful writers.

How do you know you don't possess hidden talent? Has it ever occurred to you that you might derive genuine pleasure and considerable profit from writing for publication?

We don't promise that overnight you'll turn out the Great American Novel or be able to command fabulous prices for your work. But don't overlook the fact that there are hundreds of editors who are paying $25, $50 and $100 or more for material that takes little time to write—not fiction, necessarily, but articles on home or business management, sports, travels, recipes, etc.—things that can be easily and naturally written in spare time.

How do you know you can't write? Have you ever tried? One thing is certain—you'll never find out until you try. For the one and only way to learn to write is by—WRITING!

You Owe It to Yourself to LEARN if You CAN Write!

It's not just the "big name" writers who make money. Here is a typical example of the letters that come to us constantly:

"I am able to live on the money I earn by writing, and it is not yet ten months since I began the course. Until a few months after beginning study with you I had never had a line published. What more can I say for a course which has enabled me to earn a livelihood by the most congenial work I have ever done?" John N. Ottum, Jr., Box 95, Lisbon, N. D.

The Newspaper Institute of America offers an intimate course in practical writing—a course as free from academic "isms" and "ologies" as a newspaper office—a course as modern as the latest edition of this morning's paper.

Week by week you receive actual assignments—just as if you were right at work on a great metropolitan daily. Your writing is individually corrected and constructively criticized. A group of men, whose combined newspaper experience totals more than 200 years, are responsible for this instruction. Under such sympathetic guidance, you will find that (instead of vainly trying to copy some one else's writing tricks) you are rapidly developing your own distinctive, self-flavored style. You are learning to write by writing—acquiring the same experience to which nearly all well-known writers of short-stories, novels, magazine articles, etc., attribute their success.

The time required is less than one year, the cost not more than a month's living expenses at a resident college

A Chance to Test Yourself

We have prepared a unique Writing Aptitude Test. This tells you whether you possess the fundamental qualities necessary to successful writing—acute observation, dramatic instinct, creative imagination, etc. You'll enjoy this test. The coupon will bring it, without obligation. Newspaper Institute of America, 1776 Broadway, New York.

NEWSPAPER INSTITUTE OF AMERICA 99D555
1776 Broadway, New York City, N. Y.

Send me, without cost or obligation, your Writing Aptitude Test, and further information about writing for profit.

Mr. }
Mrs. } .....
Miss }

Address .....

(All correspondence confidential. No salesmen will call on you.)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kidneys Cause Much Trouble Says Doctor

Successful Prescription Helps Remove Acids—Works Fast.

Dr. T. J. Rastelli, famous English scientist, Doctor of Medicine and Surgeon, says: "You can't feel well if your Kidneys do not function right, because your Kidneys affect your entire body."

Your blood circulates 4 times a minute through 9 million tiny, delicate tubes in your Kidneys which are endangered by drastic, irritating drugs, modern foods and drinks, worry, and exposure. Beware of Kidney dysfunction if you suffer from Night Rising, Leg Pains, Nervousness, Dizziness, Circles Under Eyes, Acidity, or Loss of Pep.

Dr. W. R. George

Dr. Walter R. George, for many years Health Director of Indianapolis, says: "Insufficient Kidney excretions are the cause of much needless suffering with Aching Back, Frequent Night Rising, Itching, Smarting, Burning, Painful Joints, Rheumatic Pains, Headaches, and a generally run-down body. I am of the opinion that the prescription Cystex corrects such functional conditions. It aids in flushing poisons from the urinary tract, and in freeing the blood of retained toxins. Cystex deserves the indorsement of all doctors." If you suffer from Kidney and Bladder dysfunction, delay endangers your vitality, and you should not lose a single minute in starting to take the doctor's special prescription called Cystex (pronounced Siss-tex) which helps Kidney functions in a few hours. It is swift, safe, and sure in action. Gently tones, soothes, and cleans raw, sore membranes. Brings new energy and vitality in 48 hours. It is helping millions of sufferers and is guaranteed to fix you up and make you feel like new in 8 days, or money back on return of empty package. Get guaranteed Cystex from your druggist today.

So Very Easy

● Popularity! Step right into it with a P-A Sax'. Play beautiful tunes first week. No failures. Learn quickly. Join a dance band in 90 days. Only P-A assures such rapid progress. Easiest blowing, fingering, most beautiful tone. See your P-A Dealer, or write direct for beautiful literature. No obligation. Easy terms. You can do it. Write today. 1172

PAN-AMERICAN
456 P-A Bldg. Elkhart, Indiana

Moderate Price

Learn ELECTRICITY IN 12 WEEKS AT COYNE

The great Coyne Shops in Chicago have a world-wide reputation for training men here in Chicago in this big-pay field in only 12 weeks. Then they get behind you to assure success by giving you lifetime employment service. By my new plan YOU can take advantage of their wonderful method of learning by doing NOW—no need to lose time and money while you strive and save to raise the necessary tuition.

I WILL FINANCE YOUR TRAINING

You can get your training first—then I'll give you over a year to pay me back, in small monthly payments starting 60 days after your required training period is over. If you will write to me at once I will send you complete details of this sensational new plan, together with the BIG FREE Illustrated BOOK telling all about COYNE. It tells how many earn while learning and about the training you get there without book study or useless theory.

H. C. Lewis
President

COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
500 S. Paulina Street, Dept. 45-11, Chicago, Illinois

Prostate Sufferers

DR. W. D. SMITH
INVENTOR

An enlarged, inflamed or faulty Prostate Gland very often causes Lameback, Frequent Night Rising, Leg Pains, Pelvic Pains, Lost Vigor, Insomnia, etc. Many physicians endorse massage as a safe effective treatment. (See Reference Book of the Medical Sciences, Vol. VII, 3rd edition.) Use "PROSAGER," a new invention which enables any man to massage his Prostate Gland in the privacy of his home. It often brings relief with the first treatment and must help or it costs you nothing. No Drugs or Electricity.

FREE BOOKLET
EXPLAINS TRIAL OFFER. ADDRESS
MIDWEST PRODUCTS CO., B-1400, KALAMAZOO, MICH.

Diesel Engineering

Power Plants—Motor Trucks—Busses—Locomotives
Ships—Tractors—Dredges—Drills—Pumps—Etc.

Training at home on all latest Diesel developments — 2- and 4-stroke cycles; solid- and air-injection fuel systems; low- and high-speed and heavy-duty types; Diesel-electric generating systems, etc. Includes all text material. Individual instruction, employment service. Write TODAY for Free Bulletin. No obligation.
American School, Dept. D-41, Drexel at 58th, Chicago

NO JOKE TO BE DEAF

—Every deaf person knows that—
Mr. Way made himself hear his watch tick after being deaf for twenty-five years, with his Artificial Ear Drums. He wore them day and night. They stopped his head noises. They are invisible and comfortable, no wires or batteries. Write for TRUE STORY. Also booklet on Deafness.

Artificial Ear Drum

THE WAY COMPANY
726 Hofmann Bldg. Detroit, Michigan

WALDE'S WONDER SALVE

RESULTS ARE REMARKABLE!
It is more than a first aid, everyone should have it.

Sold with a money back guarantee. For—Infections, Boils, Burns, Old Sores, Fresh Cuts, Bruises, Sprains, Ulcers, Felons and Sore Eyes.

TRULY A WONDER PRODUCT
Order Now. 50c Prepaid
H. R. WALDE, Lake Wales, Fla., Dept. D.

PILES DON'T BE CUT

Until You Try This Wonderful Treatment

for pile suffering. If you have piles in any form write for a FREE sample of Page's Pile Tablets and you will bless the day that you read this. Write today. E. R. Page Co., 2281-W Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

GIVEN

Sweet Toned VIOLIN

Handsome finish, highly polished. Set of strings and bow included. SEND NO MONEY. Just name and address. WE TRUST YOU with 27 packs of Garden Seeds to sell at 10c a packet. When sold send $2.70 collected and we will send Violin Outfit and Instruction Book. Learn to play in 5 minutes. No more money to pay. . . EXTRA—$100 in BIG PRIZES. You may win. *Write for seeds today.* A Post Card will do.
LANCASTER COUNTY SEED CO., Station 319, PARADISE, PA.

DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?

Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco Redeemer. Not a substitute, not habit forming. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and dependable, easy way to relieve the craving many men have.

NewellPharmacal Co.
Dept. 316, St. Louis, Mo.

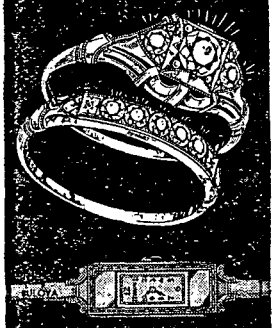
FREE BOOK

In answering any advertisement on this page it is desirable that you mention this magazine.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

END OF DEPRESSION OFFER!

Wear Watch or Diamond



30 DAYS FREE! then make YOUR OWN TERMS

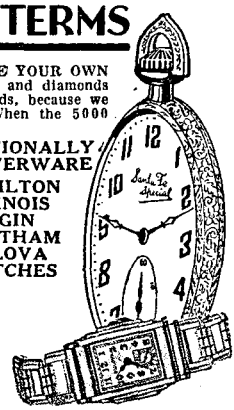
Think of it. Examine a watch or diamond, wear it, and then MAKE YOUR OWN TERMS! We make this extraordinary offer to place 5000 watches and diamonds in the hands of men and women who will show them to their friends, because we feel that every watch and diamond we place will sell another. When the 5000 are placed, this offer must be withdrawn.

DIRECT-TO-YOU, ROCK BOTTOM PRICES ON NATIONALLY ADVERTISED WATCHES, DIAMOND RINGS, AND SILVERWARE

BEAUTIFUL GENUINE PERFECTLY MOUNTED DIAMOND RINGS

What an offer! Nationally advertised watches, diamonds, and silverware offered at lowest, direct-to-you prices. For nearly a half century we have sold highest quality jewelry all over the world. And now this remarkable offer.

HAMILTON ILLINOIS ELGIN WALTHAM BULOVA WATCHES



Send For Beautiful FREE CATALOG

Write now—a post card will do—before this offer is withdrawn and get the beautiful FREE Catalog. Select the watch or diamond you want, wear it, examine it, and then write us the terms you desire.

SANTA FE WATCH COMPANY

We Buy Old Gold and Sterling Silver

457 Thomas Building Topeka, Kansas

Pocket PROFITS HOURLY

WITH HATS AND CAPS

Sensationally new line of personality styled Hats and Caps—*latest exclusive designs*—superior qualities—large selection—choice of seven spring colors—three price ranges. Caps tailored to measure and rain-proofed by Secret Taylor process. Twelve luxurious fabrics in four smart styles.

WE PAY THE POSTAGE!!

Unique sales outfit sent free just for sending name. Fits in pocket. Designed to make quick, easy sales. Simply show and write up profitable orders. No experience needed. All customers' orders sent postpaid.

TAYLOR HAT & CAP MFRS.
Dept. 23-D
15-17 W. Sixth St., Cincinnati, O.

FREE HAT AND CAP OFFER

You don't invest a red cent. Everything free. We ever give hats and caps to sincere salesmen. Send head size with name right now. A penny postcard will do.

LAW

STUDY AT HOME

Legally trained men win high positions and big success in business and public life. Be independent. Greater opportunities now than ever before. Big corporations are headed by men with legal training. Earn

$3,000 to $10,000 Annually

We guide you step by step. You can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL. B. conferred. Successful graduates in every section of the United States. We furnish all text material, including fourteen-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 64-page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send for them NOW.

LaSalle Extension University, Dept. 468-L Chicago

NEW WAY TO SMOKE

Touch a Button!
LIGHTED CIGARETTES
Come Out of Magic Case

Imagine this! You take a beautiful case from your vest pocket! Automatically a cigarette and a flame appear. You puff . . . and a LIGHTED, ready-to-smoke cigarette is delivered right between your lips. Just as easy and simple as though you could carry Lighted Cigarettes harmlessly in your pocket. Smokers crowd round when you use the Magic Case . . . they gaze in wonder . . . every one of them wants it.

Make Up to $16 a Day

Let me send you a Magic Case for 15 days' trial at my risk. Just show it . . . and watch smokers reach for it . . . eager to buy. It's a selling sensation. Agents are coining money fast. Write quick.

MAGIC CASE MFRS., Dept. D-429
4234 Cozens Ave. St. Louis Mo.

A New Finish for Any Auto 75¢

Amazing discovery restores original color of any car in a jiffy and gives iron-clad weather protection to all finishes. 75c sample refinishes two cars. 12 colors. Match any car. Nothing else like it. Sold only on **money-back guarantee.**

Profits Guaranteed to AGENTS

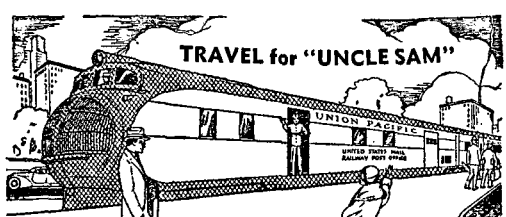
We guarantee our amazing three-way sales plan will make big profits for agents or no cost. We help you sell and give exclusive territory with commission on repeat business to right men. Write quick if you want best opportunity in years.

AUTO COLOR 421 South Ashland Avenue Dept. 26, Chicago, Ill.

LINCOLN AND INDIAN HEAD
PENNIES WANTED

WE PAY UP TO **$2** EACH IF MORE THAN 11 YEARS OLD

and up to $500 for certain U. S. Cents
Send 10c. today for 16 page fully illustrated catalog
NATIONAL COIN CO.
Box 731SM. MILWAUKEE, WIS.



START $158.00 Month

Railway Postal Clerks

Many Spring government examinations expected

Men-Women 18 to 50

COUPON

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE
Dept. N-274, Rochester, N. Y.

Sirs: Rush without charge, (1) 32-page book describing U. S. Government jobs. (2) Send list of Government jobs.

Name .....

Address .....

In answering any advertisement on this page it is desirable that you mention this magazine.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In that fraction of a second Tizzo was on his feet

The Storm

By GEORGE CHALLIS

Author of "The Great Betrayal," "The Firebrand," etc.

CHAPTER I.

TIZZO DECIDES.

THE hose on his right leg was orange; on his left leg it was green. His doublet was a puff of yellow and through the slashed sleeves of it appeared the crimson of an undertunic. He wore, not for warmth since the day was mid-summer, but merely from the excess of vanity and fashion, a short cloak which tumbled down from his shoulders and washed about from side to side behind them. And on his head, tilted a shade to an angle, there was a small round hat which was looped about by a fine golden chain.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" Farewell, Tizzo, I am a dead man!" wrote the captive Baron Melrose—but no friend of Tizzo's would die while Tizzo lived

As though this flare of colors were not enough to attract the eye, his hair was flame-red and glistened in the slant of the afternoon sun. He rode swiftly through the camp of Giovan Paolo and, coming to the tent of the commander, which was distinguished by the long pennon which flew from the peak, he slipped out of the saddle and threw the reins towards one of the men-at-arms who stood guard at the entrance.

The man was struck by the flying leather and allowed the strips to fall.

" Hold the horse, my friend," said the young fellow in the brilliant clothes. " Announce to Giovan Paolo that Tizzo is entering."

" Go ask the devil to announce you!" said the guard who had been flicked by the reins.

One of the gentry who lolled under the adjoining olive tree broke into a loud laughter and sat up to watch the brawl.

The guard added: " His Highness, Giovan Paolo, is not to be disturbed."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Why not?" asked Tizzo, walking straight towards the two guards. Compared with their armor-sheathed bulks he seemed very slender and boyish. The sword at his side appeared to be a foolish vaunt. "Is Giovan Paolo sleeping because he's had too much to drink? If he is, I'll wake him up. Announce me!"

"Announce you?" said the guard who had spoken before. "Your name may be Firebrand, but you give me no warmth. I'm hot enough in the sun without having a fire at hand. Sit down on your heels and wait for the time of His Highness."

There was another loud laugh from the nobleman who lounged under the tree, and who now stood up as though expecting something further to happen.

He said, "Here's a check for Tizzo, at last."

One of his companions answered: "I wager three ducats to one that he gets into the tent."

"The guard will see him damned first," said the first man.

"The guard will be damned himself if he tries to bar the way," said the other. "I put money on Tizzo."

Young Tizzo, at this moment, stepped straight to the angry guard and said: "Give me your name so that I can remember you."

"I give my name to my equals," said the guard, "not to wild-headed young forget-me-nots like you."

"Nevertheless, I'll shake hands with you," said Tizzo.

He caught the big, brown hand of the fighting man as he spoke. The latter tried to wrench his sword-arm free but the effort merely served to jerk Tizzo towards the entrance of the tent. Perhaps he tripped the guard as he passed. It was hard to tell exactly what happened, but the fact was that the man-at-arms tumbled flat on his back while Tizzo disappeared suddenly through the tent entrance. The guard, leaping to his feet, started to rush inside in pursuit, but his companion checked him.

"You've made a fool of yourself already," said the companion. "But if you break in on them now, you'll be damned for your folly."

"What do you mean?" asked the first man.

"Why, if you wore ears in your head you ought to have recognized the name. Tizzo is the brightness of which Giovan Paolo is the shadow; he is the warmth in Giovan Paolo's blood, the light in his eyes, the strength of his right hand. Tizzo, fool, is the man who saved the life of Giovan Paolo on the night of the Great Betrayal and got both him and the Lady Beatrice safely out of the city when men were running about like bloodhounds, lapping up the lives of the Baglioni."

"You could have told me what he was," growled the big guard.

"You asked no questions," said the other. "You brought some of your Swiss cheese with you from the Alps, but you left your wits behind you. And this is Italy, man, where brains are better than sword-blades."

"Tizzo? Tizzo?" said the man. "Now I think that I recall the name."

"Pick up the reins of his horse and hold them, then," said the other man-at-arms, "and the name may be willing to recall you."

INSIDE the tent, Tizzo saw Giovan Paolo striding up and down, his head a little bent towards the depth of his thought. On the table lay a map. Pieces of armor were stacked on a folding chair. The whole tent was filled with confusion.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Ah, Tizzo," said Giovan Paolo, hardly turning his fine head towards the interloper, "what is it now? More brawling? More tavern drinking? More duelling? You have put Gismondo of Urbino to bed for a month with one of your sword tricks; the Spaniard from Naples will never see out of both eyes again, they tell me; and Ugo of Camerino will be a lucky man if he ever recovers the use of his left arm."

"It was only the left arm," said Tizzo, seriously. "I knew that he was a fellow you put a value on, and that was why I did not teach his right arm the sort of manners it ought to know."

Giovan Paolo threw himself wearily back into a chair. He shook his head.

"Is the world always no more than a playground for you?" he asked, sadly. "Here we are shut out of Perugia, half of our friends killed, my own family slaughtered like sheep in the middle of the night, and the army which I am raising to retake the city already muttering and growling because I am slow in giving them pay. The men promised to me by the city of Florence have not appeared. All men begin to doubt my fortune. The sky turns black over me; and still you are dancing, drinking, laughing, fighting day and night without a care in the world."

"I could use some clouds in that same sky," said Tizzo. "Today is too hot for armor. The guards at your door are stewing under their cuirasses in their own sweat; they have turned as mad as hornets and try to sting your own friends."

"I heard them trying to keep you out," smiled Giovan Paolo, "but I knew that they might as well forbid a wild hawk to fly through the blue of heaven. What is it that you want?"

"Time to say farewell to you," said Tizzo.

"Farewell? You?" said Giovan Paolo.

He rose slowly from his chair. "The rest have fallen away from me," he said. "And now you? You are leaving?"

His handsome face darkened with sorrow. But he added, suddenly: "Very well. I can understand. You are too bright a butterfly for these dark days. Go where you please, Tizzo, and God go with you. Here—you will need funds for your journey. Help yourself from these—"

He jerked open the top of a small chest which appeared half filled with gold pieces. Then, stepping to the table, he unfastened a little casket awash inside with points of red and yellow and crystal flames. "Here are the last jewels which the Baglioni could collect," he said. "Fill a pocket with them. God knows you are welcome. If it were not for you, all of us would have died on that night of the Great Betrayal."

TIZZO lifted a handful of the jewels and let them sift slowly through his fingers, showering back into the casket.

"This stuff will do me no good where I am going," he said.

"Where are you going, then?" demanded the other, shortly.

"To hell," said Tizzo.

"Ha?" cried Giovan Paolo.

"To Perugia, I should say," added Tizzo.

"You? To Perugia? Yes, when we take the city by storm. Yes, then you will go to Perugia. But in the meantime even the stones in the streets would cry out 'Tizzo!' and 'Treason!' if they felt the falling of your feet."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Look!" said Tizzo, and held out a rolled letter which Giovan Paolo pulled open and read aloud:

FRIEND AND FIRE-EATER, MY TIZZO:

I send you this letter by sure hand. I have already rewarded him, but give him plenty of money when he arrives in honor of a dead man. That is myself.

The days went very well immediately after the Great Betrayal. The wine ran in the gutters, so to speak; the people cheered the murderers of the Baglioni; the traitors sat high in the saddle and they remembered Henry of Melrose with a good many favors and quite a bit of money. I began to feel that I might spend a happy time here except for the stench of murder which rises in my heart when I think of the midnight work which has been done in these streets.

However, when I was about to skim the cream off my cup of fortune and go away with it I was suddenly haled before the chiefs of the Great Betrayal—before Jeronimo della Penna, I mean, and Carlo Barciglia. For Grifone Baglioni is no longer accounted anything. Except for him they never would have taken the place, of course, but since the Great Betrayal conscience has been eating his heart; he has turned yellow and is growing old. Every day he goes to the castle of his lady mother and begs her to let him enter and give him her blessing, and every day the Lady Atlanta bars her doors against him and sends him a curse as a traitor instead of a blessing as a son.

So I was before Jeronimo and Carlo alone, and the information against me was dug up by that double-tongued snake of darkness, that hell-hound of a Mateo Marozzo, who hates you so sweetly and who wears on his forehead the cross which you put there with the point of your dagger. If he remains long out of hell, the chief devil will die of yearning.

It is this Marozzo who discovered that on the night of the Great Betrayal it was through my gate that there passed the Lady Beatrice Baglione, accompanied by the main head and brains of the Baglione family, the famous Giovan Paolo, and that firebrand, the hawk-brained wild man, Tizzo, who had snatched those two lives from the slaughter.

I damned and lied with a vengeance and offered to prove my innocence in single combat with Marozzo, but they have seen my swordwork and they shrank from that idea. In brief, out came two eye-witnesses and I was damned at once, and thrown into prison. Here Jeronimo della Penna is letting me lie while he revolves in his mind a punishment savage enough to be equal to my fault. After that, be sure, I shall die.

In dying, as I run my eyes down the years, I shall see no face more dear to me than that of my young companion who never showed his back to a friend. I shall think of you, Tizzo, as I die. Think of me also, a little, as you live.

Farewell,

HENRY OF MELROSE.

CHAPTER II.

THE RING.

GIOVAN PAOLO, when he had finished reading the letter, his voice dropping with an honest reverence as he pronounced the last words, remained for a time with his head bent.

"I know the brave Englishman," said he, at last. "I know he has been a bulwark of the house of the Oddi. I have seen him in battle and anyone who has watched the work of his sword can remember him easily enough. I know that it was he who allowed us to pass out of the city on the night of the Betrayal. I would give all the jewels and the gold in this place and all I could send for in order to set him free. But that would not help him. Money will not buy a man out of the cruel hands of Jeronimo della Penna. And what can *you* do, or any other man? We can only pray that we may storm the city and set him free before Jeronimo makes up his mind what form of torment he will use on Melrose."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I must go to him," answered Tizzo.

"Listen to me," urged Giovan Paolo. "How can one man help him?"

"The man who brought me the letter is an assistant jailer. I've bribed him with a fine sum of money. He is going to meet me in Perugia and admit me to the house of Jeronimo, where Melrose lies in one of the great cellars. He will furnish me with a file to cut through the manacles. After that, I must try to get Melrose away."

"How will you take him out of the city? Will you use wings?"

"Chance," said Tizzo. "I've worshipped her so long with dice, I've made so many sacrifices in her name, that she would not have the heart to refuse me a single request like this one."

"Tizzo—tell me in brief. What is Melrose to you? He is brave; he has an eye which is the same flame-blue as yours in a fight; he is true to his friends. I grant all that. But other men have the same qualities."

"Paolo," said Tizzo, "you and I have sworn to be true to one another. We have sworn to be blood brothers without the blood."

"That is right," nodded Giovan Paolo.

"Well, then," said Tizzo, "if I heard that you were lying in prison, expecting death, my heart would be stirred no more than when I hear that the Englishman is rotting in misery in the dungeon of della Penna."

TIZZO

Giovan Paolo, after this, merely made a mute gesture and argued no more.

"Beatrice is in the inner tent," he said. "You will want to say farewell to her?"

"No," answered Tizzo. "If I see her, I'll fall out of this resolution of mine and be in love with life again. Tell her so after I have gone."

"I shall tell her," said Giovan Paolo. "What is your plan?"

"Simply to enter the city and go to the house of a certain Alberto Marignello, in the little lane off the via dei Bardi. This Marignello is the fellow I have given the money to, the one with the keys to the cellars of della Penna. When I have the keys—why, you see that I'll not know the next step until I come to take it."

"Tizzo, you are a dead man!"

"I am," said Tizzo, cheerfully, "and that is why I have come to say farewell!"

He held out his hands, and Giovan Paolo, with a groan but with no further protest, held out his hands to make that silent farewell.

THE green, the orange, the yellow and the crimson no longer flashed on the body of Tizzo when he came near Perugia in the twilight of that day. His skin, rather fairer than that of most Italians, had been darkened with the walnut stain which he had used on the night of the Great

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Betrayal, and his red hair, darkened also, tumbled unkempt about his face. His clothes were ragged; his back was bowed under a great fagot of olive wood to which was lashed a heavy woodsman's ax. In the full light of the day a curious eye might have been interested in the blue sheen of the blade of that ax, but in the half-light of the evening the glimmer of the pure Damascus steel could not be noticed.

When he came to the gate, a pair of fine young riders were being questioned by the captain on duty there, but none of the guards paid the slightest attention to that bowed form under the heavy load of wood. A young lad inside the gate bawled: "Look! Look at the donkey walking on two legs!"

In fact, hardly the poorest man in Perugia would have carried such a crushing burden of wood on his back into the town, but Tizzo, with a hanging head and a slight sway from side to side of his entire body, strode gradually up the steep slope of the street. He turned right and left again before he came to the wide façade of the great house in which lived Atlanta Baglione, the mother of the traitor to his house. Grifone.

In the dusk, he came to the entrance of the courtyard, where the porter merely sang out: "What's this?"

"A broken back and a load of olive wood," said Tizzo. "Where shall I leave the stuff?"

He made as if to drop it to the pavement but the porter cursed him for a lout. "D'you wish to litter the street and give me extra work?" he demanded. "Get in through the court and I'll open the inner door."

He led the way, but stopped suddenly as he saw the form of a man kneeling on the farther side of the court under a shuttered window, crying out, not overloud: "Mother, whatever I have done, I have repented. If I have sinned against God, he will have his own vengeance. If I have sinned against men, my heart is already broken. But if you turn a deaf ear to me, the devils in hell are laughing!"

"So!" muttered the porter. "Always the same! Always the same! But she is the sort of pale steel that will not bend. This way, woodcutter."

He led through a doorway, but as he was about to close the door, the man who cried out in the corner of the courtyard rose and rushed to enter behind the burden-bearer. A streak of light from a window flashed dimly across his face and Tizzo recognized the most handsome features of Perugia, the richest of her sons, the pride and the boast of all her youth, Grifone. He was a great deal altered. Even in that faint glimpse, Tizzo could see the pale, hollow face. Then the door slammed heavily and shut out the vision.

"So! So!" panted the porter. "God forgive him for his sins; God forgive my lady for shutting him away; and God forgive me that I have seen such things in my life!"

He showed Tizzo where to carry the wood into a storeroom, and locked the door behind him.

"And now for the payment," said Tizzo, standing straight with a groan. "I have brought twenty backloads of that wood, now, and I need the money for it, friend."

He leaned on the handle of the ax and wiped sweat from his face.

"You want money? There is not a penny ever paid out in this household except by my lady," said the porter. "Do you want me to break in on her now?"

"Brother," said Tizzo, "there is

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neither flour nor oil in my house, to say nothing of wine, and I have to walk a league to come to my place."

"Have you carried that backload three miles?" asked the porter.

"Yes," said Tizzo, truthfully.

"Well," murmured the porter, "I shall see what can be done. It is very late, but the lady is kind as milk to every man except to her poor son."

HE left Tizzo standing, leaning against the wall, and finally ran down some stairs and told Tizzo to follow him. "She will see you. But this is a strange thing—that she knows everything and yet she does not know of any twenty backloads of wood of the olive. Well, we shall see."

He took Tizzo up the stairs and brought him into a little square anteroom where a table was piled with neatly arranged papers of account.

A moment later the lady of the house entered. The Lady Atlanta wore the black of deep mourning with double bands of blackness as though for two deaths. To be sure, her husband had been dead ever since the infancy of her son; she had never married in the interval because she had kept one memory sacred although her great wealth had tempted a number of famous suitors; and now it was plain that she mourned for Grifone, her son, as though he were dead also.

This darkness of the clothes made her face marble. Her brow was as clear as stone, her eyes were unmarked by time, and she wore that faint smile which Greek sculptors knew and loved. At first glance she seemed still in her twenties. In fact, she was not yet forty years of age.

She took her place at once behind the table, sitting straight in a backless chair and resting on the edge of the table a hand of wonderful youth and delicacy of outline.

"Your name?" she said.

"Andrea," said Tizzo, bowing until his shaggy hair almost touched the floor. "Andrea the son of Andrea the son of Andrea, the son of Luigi of the millside near the village of La Pietra."

"Andrea," said she, "you claim the payment for twenty backloads of olive wood?"

"I do," said Tizzo, bowing again.

"I have no record of ordering this fuel, my poor friend," said the lady.

"I carry the order with me," said Tizzo.

"You carry it with you?"

"Yes, my lady."

"In writing?"

"In token," said Tizzo.

He shifted the ax which he still held and drew from his breast on a slender string something which he held in the hollow of his palm so that porter could not see it but the lady could. What she saw was a broken ring.

She saw, also, the sudden flash of meaning in eyes too bright, too flame-blue for the darkness of the skin and the hair.

She saw this, and instantly looked down at the floor.

"Go to Fortinacci the steward," she said to the porter, "and ask him what he knows about this affair of Andrea the son of Andrea the son of Andrea. I will talk to Andrea in the meantime."

The porter disappeared, and Lady Atlanta rose at once.

"What is the ring?" she asked.

Tizzo, with his grimy fingers, laid it at once in the white palm of her hand and she bent over it curiously. She started straight again, suddenly. There was a wide incredulity in her eyes as she said: "It is one half of a broken signet ring of Giovan Paolo Baglione!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The other half," said Tizzo, "is worn about his neck."

"In sign of what?" she asked.

"In sign that we are sworn brothers," said Tizzo.

CHAPTER III.

A STERN MOTHER.

THE Lady Atlanta, looking with her cold, steady eyes into the face of the stranger, said to him, suddenly: "You are the red-haired man, the firebrand; you are that Tizzo—and yet you cannot be he! Hair may be stained and skin darkened, but Tizzo is a man who can cleave a thick jousting helmet with one stroke of his ax—"

Here her eye ran down along the arm and the hand of Tizzo to the blue, shimmering blade of his ax.

"Ah, it is true!" she murmured. She smiled with a radiance that made her young as a girl.

She hurried to the door and slid the bolt, whispering: "What is there that I may do? I know that you saved two sacred lives of my family. Now you are risking your head again by entering Perugia. Tizzo, you had better walk into a flaming furnace than into this town!"

"Withdraw the bolt, madame," said Tizzo. "If you honor me with a private interview, even that is enough to make men look at me, and if they look at me twice, I shall be discovered."

"True!" she said, and drew out the bolt again, instantly. "But what is there that I can do, Tizzo? Tell me how I can aid you? Whatever purpose brought you to Perugia, I shall make it my purpose!"

"My purpose," said he, "is to rescue a friend from his prison in the cellars of della Penna."

"With how many men are you to attack the house?"

"With my two hands and this ax," he said, smiling. "It is not force that will save my friend. The only thing that will unlock the bolts of della Penna's house is chance and a little bribery. I am using both."

"Tizzo, the chance is dreadfully slight. And if they capture you, your head will be on a pike before morning!"

"The chance is very small," he admitted. "There is a better and a surer way of saving my friend: beating open the gates of Perugia and restoring the city to its rightful rulers."

"Tell me what way!" she demanded, eagerly.

"You have the means in your own hands. The agent is now in your courtyard calling out on your name and begging you to let him speak to you. Your son Grifone is trusted with half the charge of the walls. He could open the gates easily, and allow the soldiers of Giovan Paolo to enter the town."

"Since Judas," she said, "there never has been such a traitor as Grifone Baglione!"

"He is your own son!" said Tizzo.

"I forswear my claim in him. He is a changeling. My true son was stolen out of my bed and a murderer's brat was placed on my breast."

"My lady, if ever the same blood showed in two faces, it is in you and his highness, Grifone."

"It cannot be," she said. "Or if I have had a share in the making of his body, I have had none in the forming of his heart. In his own house—at midnight—with his own hand he gave the signal for the butchery—and he led the way— Ah, God, when I gave him birth, what a curse I brought upon my poor Perugia!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"My lady," said Tizzo, "he was very young; he was tempted by a great jealousy."

"Of whom?"

"He suspected Giovan Paolo with his wife."

"His wife is a sacred saint, and Giovan Paolo is the noblest of men! Tizzo, only curs hate the truly noble! And Grifone may whine like a dog in the courtyard. I never shall see him!"

"One word from you, and he would throw himself on the side of Giovan Paolo."

"Giovan Paolo would not have the traitor's aid—not for the price of two cities, each twice greater than Perugia."

"My lady, it is true that Giovan Paolo would never forgive him, but if Grifone will restore the Baglioni to their own, then a peace can be made between them. His Highness, Grifone, can withdraw with all his possessions to another place. And time may partly close the breach between them."

"Death alone can close it!" said the Lady Atlanta.

"Madame, I beg you to think—it is in your power to restore the Baglioni to Perugia."

"It is the dearest wish of my soul, but shame would keep Grifone from lifting a hand to help the men he has wronged."

"Be sure that his heart is suffering. There is torture in his face. A word from him will make him repent everything and strive to make amends to all the people of his blood."

"Tizzo, I have sworn a great and sacred oath never to look on his face, never to speak to him, never to listen to his voice. If I hear him crying out under my window, I run to another room and stop my ears."

"An oath which is wrong should not be maintained. Every priest will grant you absolution for breaking it."

"I did not swear it with thin breath; I swore it with my heart and soul."

TIZZO, for a moment, regarded the beauty, the terrible anger in her face. And he knew that persuasion would be impossible.

"Then I kiss your hand and leave you, my lady," he said.

She retained his hand in both of hers, the fierce passion dying gradually out of her eyes.

"But you, Tizzo," she said. "I know what you have done. I know by words, and also, I saw that great jousting helmet cloven to the bottom by your ax-stroke. There is not strength in your hands for such a feat and therefore it must be a strength in your heart. Trust me, that if I know any manner in which I may aid you and help you, I am at your service. There is money here—or jewels which have a greater price—will you have them?"

She actually stripped the rich rings from her fingers. But Tizzo shook his head.

"There are men in this house whom I could trust to support you in anything."

"No, my lady," said Tizzo. "I have had enough money for my purpose. More would only be a weight in my pocket. And as for men, the thing I have to do is better and more easily managed by one hand than by twenty. Secrecy has to be the point of the sword for me now."

"Must I feel that my hands are empty to help you?" she exclaimed.

"No, my lady. I shall remember you when I come to the time of need, and that will make me stronger."

"You will go on this wild enterprise, Tizzo?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I must go, at once."

"Tell me what service I can do, other than this, for Giovan Paolo and his men?"

"Send to my friend, Antonio Bardi, and tell him that Giovan Paolo forgives the part he played in the Great Betrayal. At least, Bardi did no murder on that night."

"How can Giovan Paolo forgive a single soul who took part in the Great Betrayal?"

"Because he is as wise as he is brave. My lady, send for Bardi. Tell him he is forgiven if he wishes to strike a blow on our side. Send, also, for my foster father, Luigi Falcone. He has taken no stand on either side. But he will ride and fight for me. Those two men inside the city, if they will meet in your house and lay their plans together, may be strong enough to open Perugia to the attack of Giovan Paolo. Farewell!"

"Farewell, noble Tizzo!" said the Lady Atlanta. "If I were a man, I would go at your side, tonight!"

IT was easy enough for Tizzo to get down the stairway and out into the courtyard, unobserved.

The court was empty. A thunderstorm was rolling over the city, lighting up its towers and mountain-ranges of clouds with long ripplings of cataracting lightning. Brief, rattling showers raised a pungent odor of dust in the air, and scurried the people out of the streets, as Tizzo turned away from the great, unhappy house of the Lady Atlanta.

He had never seen, he was sure, a lady so beautiful. Not the young and lovely wife of Grifone, even, was so like an immortal. Compared with such majesty and purity of features, the Lady Beatrice was a mere tomboy. She was a mere prettiness, in contrast. But then it was her spirit that set the hearts of men burning.

Thinking of her, Tizzo turned into the via dei Bardi and there forgot everything except his purpose. From the street of the Bardi, he turned into the alley that branched off from it, crooked and downhill as the course of a stream; and the lofty, irregular front of the houses might well have been a cañon which the running water had worked out of the living rock.

The house of Alberto Marignello had been well described to him. He found it almost at once and was about to cross the street towards it when a slender youth, wrapped in a cloak to defy the rain, said to him: "Tizzo, there have been many men there before you!"

He turned with a half groan of bewilderment and fear. "Beatrice," he whispered, "in the name of what god have you come to Perugia tonight?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE ENEMY'S LAIR.

SHE stood back with one elbow leaning against the wall, her hat pulled half down across her forehead, her legs crossed, her whole attitude one of super-boyish impudence and mirth. He had seen her so often in man's clothes, she was so certain to slip into them whenever there was an emergency of importance, that his quickest memory of her was not in dresses at all. She was saying: "I came to Perugia in the name of the great god of the fire, in the name of the firebrand; I came for Tizzo. Does that answer please you, my most noble lord?"

"Beatrice, listen to me—"

"If you talk so earnestly, people will

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

notice you. If they look at you twice, they'll soon have you clapped into a fire to burn in good earnest, Messer Firebrand."

"They will find you in the town. They will surely recognize you, Beatrice. And if they get their hands on you—"

"They don't murder women," said Beatrice. "Not even in Perugia."

"They'll do worse. They'll marry you to one of their brutal selves for the sake of your estate."

"And then comes noble Sir Tizzo and runs my false husband through the gizzard and makes me a widow today and a new wife tomorrow. You see, I risk very little. No matter what road the story starts away on, it will wind up with Beatrice and Tizzo hand in hand at the close."

"My God, how wild, how foolish, and how charming you are," said

BEATRICE

Tizzo. "Giovan Paolo should not have told you where I had gone."

"I pulled the story out of him like so many teeth. Tizzo, you would sneak away and let yourself be killed? Sneak away without a word of farewell to me?"

"I had not the courage to face you."

"When I knew you were gone, I was empty," she said. "I felt, suddenly, as though you had never kissed me, as though you had never said you loved me. I felt as though danger were another woman, and you had gone to her. So I had to come here and meet you in the street."

"You must go instantly from the city."

"With you, Tizzo, I would go anywhere."

"I cannot go with you farther than the walls."

"Then I shall not leave Perugia."

"Beatrice, I beg you—if you love me—"

"I only love the man who lets me share his dangers," she said.

"I will take you to the walls and see you safely away."

"I shall not go unless you come with me."

He groaned.

AND then he said: "The work which lies before me is something I cannot turn my back on."

"Your work is spoiled before it commenced," she said.

"Why?"

"I've lingered up and down this street, and I've seen half a dozen men enter that building."

"Why not? More than one family lives in it."

"Men in cloaks, with something under the cloaks."

"Bread from the baker, perhaps."

"Bread or steel ground sharp along two edges, more likely," she said.

"Marignello has been paid his price. He would not betray me."

"Perhaps he could get a greater price from della Penna."

"He would not dare to confess that he had been in touch with me."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"No? He would simply say that, from the first, he had been attempting to draw you into a trap."

"There is not that degree of guile in him."

"Tizzo, for all your cleverness—and I know you are not a fool—you continue to think that men are as honest as yourself. And that *is* a folly. Why, Tizzo, every man in Perugia knows that Mateo Marozzo, for instance, would pay all the gold in his treasury for the sake of one chance to drive a knife into your body!"

"Marozzo hates me. They all hate me, now. But I must count on Marignello. Without him, I have no hope. And that means that Melrose has to die without a hand lifted to save him."

"Henry of Melrose," she said, "has followed adventure all his life. He could never expect to die peacefully. Let him have the end that he has invited."

"I cannot, Beatrice."

"Will not, you should say."

"I love you, Beatrice; but even you hardly stir my blood and draw my soul from me so much as that wild Englishman."

"He taught you half a dozen tricks of fencing, and therefore you love him."

"There is something more than that," said Tizzo, frowning. "Long ago, when I saw him, suddenly I had to follow him. I left the inheritance of a great house and a huge fortune for the sake of tagging about the world at his heels."

"Perhaps he used a charm on you?"

Tizzo crossed himself and murmured: "God forbid! But I must go forward in this."

"You mean that you will surely enter that house?"

"Most surely I shall."

"Well, then, I shall show you one thing first," said the girl.

Before he could stop her, she was half way across the street, and he saw her pass straight through the door of the tall house. As she opened the door, he had a glimpse of a dull light and suddenly reaching hands. He saw a flash of naked steel here and there in the background.

He ran like a deer to the rescue but the door slammed heavily; he arrived at it only in time to hear the clank of the heavy iron bolt rammed home into a stone socket.

TO beat against the door with his ax would simply be a folly. He ran to the left into a meager alley hardly the width of a man's body and saw, high above his head, the glimmer of a light through a barred window.

Springing up as high as possible, he was barely able to hook the lower edge of the ax over the sill of the window. Then he drew himself up into the casement and curled into the embrasure. Through the bars of the window he found himself looking down into a large room with a fire flickering on a deep hearth and a mist of woodsmoke in the air. And in the midst of the room stood a full dozen of men clustered about the Lady Beatrice, holding her fast by the arms.

Alberto Marignello stood before her, his rather handsome but heavy face darkened by a scowl.

"Now, my lad," he was saying, "explain why you open the door of a place where you have never been seen before?"

"I come here because I bring a message."

"What sort of a message?"

"A brief one," said the girl.

"From whom?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"From a man I met outside the gate of San Ercolano."

"Well, what sort of a man?"

"A young man with red hair."

"Ah, ha!" said Marignello. "Young—with red hair, and blue eyes that never stop shining?"

"Yes, that is he."

"You see?" said Marignello. "She has seen that Tizzo—that blue-eyed devil of a Tizzo! Well, and what message did he give you?"

"To come here and find a man called Alberto Marignello."

"That is my name."

"Well, then I'm to tell you that he cannot come tonight."

"Ah, he cannot come?"

"No."

"Will he come tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow after dark, if you will come out to the camp of Giovan Paolo and arrange a second meeting place."

"I go again into the jaws of the lion?" said Marignello. "I am not such a fool."

"That was the message. And then I come here," said Beatrice, angrily, "and you all leap at me like dogs at a bone."

It seemed a miracle to the watcher at the window that they should not see, at once, that she was no boy at all. The beauty and the dignity of the Baglioni was in her face in spite of her rough clothes. And in her voice there was a strange sweetness that should have undeceived them at once, he thought. But in that voice there was also a huskiness, and it was true that she looked slender and small enough to have passed for a boy at the turning point towards youth.

A strangeness came into the mind of Tizzo. He half wanted to shout: "Fools! You have in your hands the greatest prize, bar one, that you could ask for. You have the sister of Giovan Paolo. With her in your hands, you are safe, and Giovan Paolo himself will not dare to attack the city—not if he had a million armed men behind him!"

And again, with his bare hands, he wanted to tear at the iron bars and wrench them from their stone sockets and plunge into the room.

HERE a great booming of thunder began, one of those cataracting sounds which pour over heaven like a cart over a brazen bridge. Inserting the stout oaken haft of the ax between the bars, he bore down with all his strength. Something gave. It was not the stone socket, but the soft iron itself bent, and so was pulled loose. With his hand he was able to draw it away from the socket.

As the uproar of the thunder died down, one of the men said: "This story that the boy tells is all very smooth and well. But I wish to ask when he passed through the gate at San Ercolano?"

"Oh, half an hour ago," said the Lady Beatrice.

The fellow who had asked the question turned with a sudden grin on his companions. He threw out his hand to make an important gesture. Then he said: "It was less than a half hour ago that I passed near San Ercolano and found out that the gate had not been opened during the entire afternoon."

"The small portal in the gate was open, however," said Beatrice, and the heart of Tizzo stood still as he listened.

"The portal was not opened!" shouted the fellow who had last spoken. He had a broad, brutal face and Tizzo swore that he would never forget that countenance.

"The portal was not opened. The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entire guard was taken from the gate at noon! At noon, mind you! And the boy lies!"

"Ah, ha," said Marignello. "Is that the way of it? Now, he looks capable of a good lie, when I look at him again. His face is a little too fine for those clothes. Give me your hand, boy!"

Beatrice held out her hand, and Marignello leaned over it. Suddenly he threw it to one side. He exclaimed: "It is soft as the hand of a woman! This fellow never has done a stroke of work! What has your labor been, eh?"

"I've been a tailor's apprentice," said Beatrice, instantly.

"Ha? So! Well that may be, too," said Marignello, half convinced by this remark.

"No tailor's apprentice ever stood so straight," said another. "From sitting cross-legged, their shoulders begin to stoop before they're twelve years old."

"Aye, and their chins stick out in front."

"Aye, and they squint!"

These remarks came in a general murmur. The thunder rolled heavily again, and Tizzo used that noise to cover the wrenching jerk with which he pried loose a second bar. Another pair, and he would have opened a sufficient space to admit his body. After that, if once he got down into that room with his ax—well, they would have something to think about other than this "boy" they were questioning.

"YOU are not a tailor's apprentice," said Marignello, pointing to her hand. "See, there is no enlargement of the thumb and the forefinger of the right hand, and the left forefinger is not stuck full of the little scars of the needle point. Confess that you have lied."

"I was ill for six months and the scars wore away from my skin," said Beatrice Baglione.

"I never saw a tailor," said Marignello, "who dared to look people straight in the eyes in the manner of this lad. He holds up his chin in the manner of one who has told servants to come and to go. Come—the signore will be here in a little while, and then we may learn something more about this lad."

It was only another moment, in fact, when a knock came distinctly at the street door.

"Shall I open?" asked one of the men.

"No, not till I have spoken," said Marignello.

He approached the door and called out: "Who is there?"

The answer was indistinguishable to Tizzo, but Marignello called again: "What word has passed between us?"

He paused for the answer and then said to the other: "This is right. He has named the word which he and I alone know. It is the signore."

He then unbarred the door and there entered a man in a scarlet cloak whose collar was wrapped up high about the head and face in order to shut off the rain.

He threw back this cloak and revealed himself in a fine doublet and costly hose that had a silken sheen. He had a colored handkerchief thrust inside his belt and carried a dagger as well as a sword. His soft hat was of blue velvet, and it was pulled low over his forehead. In spite of this, the silver gleam of a scar appeared just above the center of the forehead and looked like a streak of grease. Tizzo recognized his own handiwork. With the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

point of his dagger he had drawn a cross into the flesh of Mateo Marozzo, the point of the sharp steel shuddering against the bone. This man he had branded for life, and it was a deed which he looked back upon only with pleasure. He wished, now, that he had driven the dagger through the fellow's heart.

Marignello said: "We have caught a queer lad here, who says that he's a tailor's apprentice. But he hasn't that look. He says that he carries a message from Tizzo. Will your lordship look at him?"

Marozzo approached the Lady Beatrice and stared full in her face.

Then he said: "This is, in fact, a very queer — *lad!* Marignella, take yourself and your men away. Let me have plenty of time alone with this— *lad.* And I may make something of him!"

CHAPTER V.

THE SLAP.

MARIGNELLO got quickly out of the room, the slamming of the door behind him and his companions being quite covered by an immense, crashing downpour of the rain. In that uproar, Tizzo managed to work the other bars from the sockets. He had plenty of room, now, to slip through the window, but his position was frightfully complicated. If he leaped down, the ten foot drop to the floor from that high casement probably would send him sprawling, and before he could rise the dagger of Marozzo would be in his back. He waited, the corners of his mouth jerking with eagerness.

He could hear Marozzo, now, saying: "Dangerous, beautiful — most beautiful, most dangerous, Lady Beatrice! Can I tell you how welcome you are to me?"

"My dear Mateo," said the girl, "I ought to be welcome to you. You can make a very neat sum of money out of me, I suppose."

"Money?" said Marozzo. "Do you think that we will sell you? No, sweetheart, you will never leave Perugia, and so long as you are inside the city the hands of Giovan Paolo are tied. He cannot strike at us for fear we may strike at you. You mean more than money to all of us. You mean life, Beatrice, life!"

He began to laugh, putting his face close to hers, jeering.

"And the handsome fellow with the red hair—the firebrand—Tizzo—I suppose it was he who drew you into this crazy adventure, my lady? Your reputation—what is that to a man whose brain is all in a flame? Such a bright flame that the pretty little moths, the charming, delicate Beatrices, are always flying into the fire!"

"Mateo," she answered, "Tizzo has nothing to do with this."

"Certainly not. You didn't even know that he was expected here this evening? You were merely walking up the street by chance? You merely happened to walk through this door? Certainly Tizzo could have nothing to do with it!"

She took a deep, quick breath and looked fixedly at Marozzo.

"Mateo, you can make a fortune, a great fortune, if you'll see me out of the city."

"If an angel came down and offered me a throne in heaven for returning you to your brother, I would never do it!" said Marozzo.

"No," she said, slowly, "I think you mean that!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I mean it with all my heart. We are leaving the house now, my lady!"

"To cheat your friend Marignello of his share in the reward? There is as much fox as dog in you, Mateo," she said.

And Marozzo, overwhelmed with a sudden frenzy of hate, flicked the tips of his fingers across her face.

IT was not thought that governed Tizzo. Far better for him to have slipped back down to the street and waited for Marozzo and his prize in the darkness of the narrow way. But he could not resist the lightning impulse which overcame him when he saw the girl struck. He slid through the window and dropped to the floor, and his foot, striking a wet spot on the tiles, shot him headlong on the slippery pavement.

He was already half twisting to his feet when he saw Marozzo running in at him with a levelled sword. An agony of quick fear had turned the face of Mateo white and pulled his mouth into a horrible grin; an agony of joy at this golden opportunity set his eyes blazing. He might have brought a dozen men swarming by a single cry, but that conflict of his emotions seemed to have throttled him. Or perhaps he saw, in this gleaming instant, a chance to accomplish a double deed—the capture of Lady Beatrice and the death of Tizzo. Such a thing would make him a hero forever among the powers who then ruled the city of Perugia. He would be, at once, among the great ones.

So he sprang at Tizzo, the sword shooting out before him for the death stroke. It came with such speed that there was no avoiding it, but Beatrice caught at the backward flaring cloak of Marozzo with such strength that he was checked and jerked a little to the side. That gave Tizzo the fraction of a moment he needed for rising to his feet. The head of the ax, light as gilded paper in the practiced grasp of

MAROZZO

his hands, struck aside the next thrust. He was in no position to use the edge of the ax for a counterstroke. Instead, he drove the butt of the haft between the eyes of Marozzo and snatched the sword as it fell from the unnerved hand.

Marozzo fell in a heap, not utterly unconscious but still struggling to recover himself. To Tizzo the miracle was that a yell of alarm had not roused the house before this.

"Quick! Quick, Tizzo!" gasped Lady Beatrice, already at the street door.

"Go in the name of God," he commanded. "Go to the house of Lady Atlanta and she will shield you. I have one more thing to attempt here."

With a twist of cloth he was tying the hands of Marozzo behind his back. Then he drew the little poniard from the side of Marozzo and flashed it before his eyes.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"If you mark me again like a branded beast—" groaned Marozzo. "Kill me outright, Tizzo. Ah, God, to think that I had you so close to the point of my sword!"

"A greater miracle is going to happen," said Tizzo. "You will have a chance for your life if you listen to me! Beatrice, will you go? Will you go? Are you staying here to drive me mad? Slip away! Swift, to the house of the lady, and she will help you from the city."

The girl stepped to the table and sat down on the edge of it, swinging one small foot.

"I stay here," she said. "I haven't had so many chances of seeing you at work, Tizzo."

He glared at her, baffled.

"There is still danger!" he insisted. "There is a frightful danger—I beg you with the blood of my heart—go at once!"

"While you stay here?" said the girl. "No, I stay where you stay. Save your breath. You can't persuade me to leave you."

He glared at her once more, half enraged, half desperate. Then he turned back to Marozzo.

"STAND up!" he commanded, and Marozzo rose. His eyes saw one thing only, the deadly splinter of steel, the almost invisible needle point of the poniard which was at his breast.

"Step to the door," said Tizzo, and led his captive there.

He pulled that door a trifle ajar and ordered: "Call to Marignello and tell him to send all his companions away. Tell him you have learned something that is only for his ears and yours. In a hearty, happy voice, Marozzo, or by St. Stephen you'll have something sharper than arrows in your heart!"

"I'll be no tool of yours!" panted Marozzo. "Stab me, then; but I'll not do your work for you! The day is cursed that first saw you!"

"Ah, Mateo, do you invite me?" asked Tizzo through his teeth. "Don't you see, Marozzo, that wild horses are drawing me forward to your slaughter, you jackal? But do as I tell you and I give back your dirty life. You hear?"

In that moment of shame and surrender, Marozzo glanced towards the girl and found her hard, cruel eyes fixed upon him. His head dropped.

"Make up your mind," said Tizzo. "Will you call to Marignello? Heartily?"

"Yes," said Marozzo.

His head jerked back. His eyes were half closed, and suddenly he shouted to the full of his lungs: "Marignello! Help! Hel—"

The point of Tizzo's dagger could have stifled the first word of that cry, but he could not strike it into a defenseless throat. His whole heart yearned to kill the traitor, and still he could not use the edge of the dagger. Instead, he jerked it about and struck with the pommel once, twice, and again into the midst of that still beautiful face.

A smashed red ruin took the place of a face. Marozzo slid through the arms of Tizzo like a figure of sand and lay helpless on the floor.

"Tizzo, they are coming!" panted the girl.

"They are," he admitted. "But I can't leave. There's still a chance. I *must* get from Marignello the keys that he holds—Beatrice, for the last time—will you run for your life?"

A tumult of many footfalls came hurrying, and Tizzo barred the inner door against that influx.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Signore Marozzo? Your highness?" Marignello was calling out anxiously as he came.

And then a light and silver sound of laughter chimed in the room, making Tizzo jerk his head suddenly about. It was the Lady Beatrice, with her head tilted back, now crying out: "Your highness—Signore Marozzo—how can I help laughing—"

The inner door was shaken.

"Your highness—did you call to me?"

"Yes, for wine," said Lady Beatrice. "I'll unbar the door for you, Marignello—"

She looked fixedly at Tizzo and walked up to the door. He, understanding suddenly, dragged the fallen body of Marozzo aside and placed himself where the door would cover him as it swung open.

There he waited. A crack of light struck in on him as he stood there while the door swung wide under the hands of the girl.

"ONLY you, Marignello," she said, still laughing. "There is a secret, here, and you are the only man his highness will admit to it. Step in!"

"A secret? I thought I heard a yell for help—" began Marignello, as he stepped through the door.

The girl shut and barred it instantly behind him.

"But where is Signore Marozzo—" began Marignello. It was only then that he saw the gleam of the poised ax in the hand of Tizzo. He made no effort to leap back. There was not a man in Perugia who did not know the singular and deadly magic which Tizzo could work with that weapon.

"Tie his hands," said Tizzo softly, to the girl.

It was done instantly.

"Is there a rear door out of the house?" whispered Tizzo to the stricken Marignello.

The eyes of the man dropped to the still figure of Marozzo on the floor.

"You still have a chance for life," promised Tizzo, "but only if you lend us your help."

"May I live? Oh, God, is it possible that you give me my life?" breathed Marignello. "There is, my lord. There is a door at the back of the house."

"Then tell all those fellows of yours to leave the place by that door—to return here tomorrow at the same time. Sing out in a hearty voice. You hear me?"

Marignello nodded. His eyes blinked. Twice he moistened his lips and took deep breaths, before he called out in a ringing tone: "It's finished for tonight. Paolo—Guido—all of you out the back way; I have to confer here with his highness."

"This is all too damned strange," said a heavy, growling voice beyond the door.

Marignello looked down again at the limp figure, the blood-dripping face of Marozzo, and shuddered.

"Orders from his highness," he said. "We've found wonders in the boy — and tomorrow night, my lads! At the same hour. We'll have the trap and we'll have the Tizzo to catch in it, and double pay for all."

There was still a little murmuring, but presently the footfalls began to withdraw. The knees of Marignello were bending under his weight, and the cold burden of fear.

"Be brave, Marignello," said Tizzo. "I have made a promise. Fill your part of the bargain, and you shall live, I swear."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"God and your highness forgive me for treachery!" groaned Marignello. "But they offered me a fortune, a treasure of gold! They hate you so, and they fear you so, that they would buy your death with your own weight in gold. Yes, they would make a statue of you all in precious metals and set jewels in the head of it for eyes. They would give that away to make sure of your death!"

"I understand," said Tizzo.

The girl had gone to the street door and was listening, but the crashing of the rain muffled all other sounds outside the house. Small gusts of wind worked down the chimney and knocked puffs of smoke out into the room.

"But you have, somewhere in the house, keys that fit doors in the prison cellars of della Penna," said Tizzo. "You were not lying when you told me that you were a trusted man?"

"I was not, signore. No, no, I am a trusted man—and God forgive me for once betraying my trust! There are three sets of the keys, one in the hands of his highness, Jeronimo della Penna, and the head jailer keeps one—he never leaves the house; and I have a smaller set."

"What will your smaller set open? The outer door of the cellars?"

"Yes, signore."

"Marignello, you will still be a treasure to me! Where are those keys?"

"They are at the key-maker's."

"Ha?"

"His Highness, Jeronimo della Penna, ordered me to have my set copied."

TIZZO groaned, but the girl, turning from the door, said: "He lies, Tizzo."

"Why do you think so?"

"Three sets of keys to one dungeon—that is more than enough. If Jeronimo used all the wits he possesses, he would never have so many. Besides, would he trust such keys into common hands? Into the hands of a keymaker, who might make ten sets as easily as one?"

"True!" exclaimed Tizzo. He turned sharply on Marignello, who cowered as though he expected death to strike him that instant.

"You have lied, Marignello?" he demanded.

"Ah, my lord, consider! For these years I never have broken my trust to my master! How can I break it now?"

"You were bribed by Henry of Melrose."

"No, signore. I took his money, but then I carried the letter to my master. He read it through and told me to deliver it—and keep the bribe. You see, I tried to be honest."

"I think you have," said Tizzo, with a queer turning of his heart. "As well as you could, you've tried. You've tried to betray me and trap me—but I suppose that money can buy outright a conscience like yours. But now, Marignello, make up your mind. Will you give me the keys or will you not? Will you give them to me, or will you die here?"

"They are in that closed cupboard at the corner of the room," sighed Marignello.

Beatrice was instantly at the place, and when she had pulled the door open she drew out from one of the inner shelves a bunch of keys which were dark with rust in places but polished with use in others.

"Are these the ones, Marignello?" she asked.

"They are," said Marignello, sink-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing his head. "And I am a ruined man forever!"

"You have made a fortune out of your treachery," said Tizzo. "Why not leave Perugia, then, and spend your money in another place?"

"Because wine in other cities has no taste, and bread in another place will not fill the belly. Except in Perugia there is no good air for breathing; in other places, the men are fools and the women are foul," said Marignello, mournfully.

A deep sigh from Marozzo, at this moment, called attention back to him, and Beatrice stooped above his body.

"Now for the keys," said Tizzo. "One by one—slowly—here, I draw a diagram on the floor as you name me the rooms and the passages, one by one. Now, begin!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUNGEON.

THEY left Marozzo and Marignello lashed hand and foot, converted into two lifeless hulks which were rendered silent with strong gags. The cloak and the hat of Marignello were taken by Tizzo. That of Marozzo would shelter Beatrice from the rain.

And now, with the ax under the folds of the cloak, Tizzo stood beside the girl in the street. The eaves above them shut away most of the rain, which rushed down just past their faces.

"You see that where I am going now, no one can go with me," said Tizzo. "I have to be as secret as a cat, as casual as a pack-mule. If I tried to take you with me, I would be lost at once."

"I know it," said Beatrice. "But if you go, Tizzo, I shall never see you again!"

"The keys give me a good chance. The clothes of Marignello may help me more than everything else."

"Suppose that you even get to the Englishman and then find that already he has been torn and ruined by torture so that he can't follow you?"

Tizzo groaned.

"I must not find him that way!" he said.

Then he added: "You can go to one of three houses—that of Lady Atlanta, or to my foster father, Luigi Falcone, or to the place of Antonio Bardi. Which one will you choose?"

"Lady Atlanta."

"Farewell, Beatrice."

"Tizzo, say something now for me to remember through the years when I think of you going into the rat-trap."

He laughed a little. Soft-footed thunder ran down the farther sky. Lightning slid along a crack of brightness.

"You'll remember that I drank too much wine, loved dice and fighting. Remember, too, that I loved my friends and one exquisite lady—one that could be more troublesome than smoke in the eyes, more delightful than a warm fire in December."

He could see that her eyes were closed as she leaned back against the wall.

"Now go before I begin to weep," she said.

He turned and hurried up the street.

HE had with him the ax muffled under the cloak, the broad, strong dagger of Marignello, and a file made of the most perfect steel, three cornered, ready to eat through other metal like fire through wood. Also, he had keys and a plan

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the cellars of della Penna. These items were all advantages. Against him he had the hands of a strongly occupied house where one word of alarm would bring a score of well-armed men.

Was that why he was singing under his breath when he looked up at the gloomy façade of the house of della Penna?

He passed the main entrance, with its lanterns lighted, the horses waiting saddled in the street; for now that Jeronimo della Penna was the chief lord of Perugia, he had to have horses in readiness night and day.

Around the corner he came on a small portal which was sunk into the wall, a little round-topped doorway. Into the lock of this he fitted the largest of his keys, and felt the wards moving instantly, silently under the pressure.

That success was to him prophetic of victory all the way through. It seemed a sufficient proof that Marignello had not lied. He pushed the door open, and found himself in a little semicircular guard-room where a man in breastplate and morion was rising and picking up an unsheathed sword. He gave one glance at the weapon and at the little gray pointed beard of the guard. Then he walked by, making his step longer, heavier, more lumbering to match the gait of Marignello.

"Well, Marignello," said the guard, "this is before your time, isn't it?"

Tizzo went silently on.

Behind him he heard a muttering voice say: "Surly, voiceless, low-hearted dog!"

But Tizzo, turning a bend of the corridor, left the thought of the guard behind him. He had passed through the second stage of success and now he could swear that all would go well. A great premonition of victory accompanied him.

The stairs, exactly as Marignello had charted them, opened to the right of the hall. In a niche in the wall were placed three or four small lanterns, and one of these he took with him to light his way. The dull illumination showed him the descending stages as the stairway passed over laid stone and then was cut into the living rock. A singular odor filled the air. Gray slime covered the damp corners.

Down for two stories he passed into the bowels of the earth before he came to another hall somewhat narrower than the ones above it.

The third door on the right was his destination. When he came to it he waited for an instant, his ear pressed to the iron-bound door, his heart beating wildly. It would be worth everything to shine his lantern into the blue eyes of the Englishman and see his face change when he recognized his friend. All danger was worth while in the light of that moment of recognition.

He tried the prescribed key. It worked, but not so easily, the rusted lock groaning a little under the weight of his effort. At last the door sagged inwards; he took a sudden, long step inside and pressed the door shut behind him. Then he raised the lantern high.

What he saw was emptiness. There was not a soul in the cell. A flat bit of moldering straw in a corner might have served as a bed at one time. That was the only sign.

HE looked up despairingly at the glimmer of sweat on the ceiling of the rock. He saw the innumerable chisel strokes with which the tomb had been carved in the rock. He

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would need a patience as great as that if he were to find the Englishman in another part of this underground world which generations had enlarged, patiently, to provide store rooms and prisons for the lordly family which lived in the upper regions of light and air.

He sat down, like a prisoner himself, on the pallet of straw, and tried to remember. As he had charted the plan of the underground rooms at the direction of Marignello, so now he re-drew the plan in his mind, bit by bit, carefully. This flight of chambers, all small, ran from side to side of the cellar. Above were slightly larger rooms. In the lowest level of all there was only the torture chamber, fittingly placed at the foot of the entire structure so that the frightful sounds from it might not rise to the upper levels, poisoning the souls of all who heard.

Had Marignello simply lied—speaking truth until he came to the last and most important step of all? Did the scoundrel really have in him one strong devotion—to his trust in the house of della Penna?

If so, it was a miracle; for one evil corrupts the entire soul.

With the lantern, Tizzo examined the heavy iron bracket and ring which were fastened at the foot of one side of the wall, opposite the door. The ring was completely covered with rust, but when he examined the inside of it, he found that the rust powdered and flaked away. He stared at the floor. There was already a very thin deposit of the same iron dust on the floor, enough to stain the tips of his fingers red.

No, Marignello had not lied entirely. Into that ring, very recently, fetters had been locked and by their chafing had loosened the rust.

Perhaps Henry of Melrose already was dead. Perhaps his body had been taken from the cell and buried. If not to a grave, to what place would he be removed?

Yes, living, they might take him to another room—the torture chamber underneath!

Tizzo was up, instantly, and in the corridor outside. Something gray and dim streaked across his feet. He heard the incredibly light scampering of a rat, saw the gleam of the long, naked tail, heard a faint squeak that made his flesh crawl.

There was no air for breathing. Fear like a vampire sucked the life from him. He would have given a year of life for the sake of ten deep breaths of the outer night.

He had done enough, he kept telling himself. He had made the venture, found failure, and now it was time for him to think of his own safety.

But while his mind was rehearsing these silent words, his feet were bearing him steadily down the corridor, and then down the last windings of the stairs. Only in the center were they worn a little by traffic. Green-gray slime grew on the wet of the steps to either side.

At the bottom of the steps there was no corridor, only a brief anteroom, so to speak, and then a very powerful door, crossed and recrossed with such iron bars that it could have endured the battering of a ram designed to tear down a wall.

The key for this door had not been named by Marignello, but there were only three that could possibly fit the yawning mouth of the lock. It was the third of these that, actually, turned the bolt and slid it with a slight rumbling noise. The hinges of the door did not creak, however. For whatever

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hellish purposes, this room was used and opened at not too infrequent intervals.

Gradually, he pushed the door open and stepped inside.

WHAT he saw was such a quantity of gear hanging from the ceiling, such a litter dripping down the walls, such complicated machines standing on the floor, that it looked like the interior of some important manufacturer's shop — some place, say, where iron is formed to make singular weapons or tools of trade. But those machines were not designed for the working of wood or of iron; they were framed to work torment into the human flesh, and the ingenuity of a thousand devils could not have done more.

Wherever the swift eye of Tizzo glanced, he saw monstrosities that sickened him. A pair of huge metal boots, he knew at once, were used to encase legs, while various turn-screws and wheels attached to the boots indicated the pressures which could be applied. On the wall, a great cross of iron was equipped with three terrible screws so that the victims could be crucified alive. The rack, with its double wheels at either end and all its strong tackle, looked like a carriage turned upside down, and of course it occupied the place of honor, being an instrument on which all sorts of tunes of agony could be improvised. Then there was the wheel which could turn a man head down or else spin him into a nausea. There was the hurdle for the water torture; there was tackle for hoisting men by the wrists or the thumbs into the air and leaving them suspended. There were iron weights, hammers, picks, saws with frightful teeth that reminded Tizzo of the story of the poor man who, in this prison, had a span sawed off his right arm every day until the arm was gone to the shoulder before he was willing to confess where he had buried his treasure.

But the eyes of Tizzo fled from these horrors, and the light of his lantern now showed him, stretched on a heap of straw that was gray with time, a fine figure of a man who now lifted his head and allowed Tizzo to see the resolute face and the intensely blue eyes of Henry, Baron of Melrose.

CHAPTER VII.

TORTURE.

TIZZO, with the door of the torture chamber closed, standing then above the Englishman, found the face of his friend in a sea of wavering light, because the lantern was being held in an uncertain hand.

Melrose, making a great effort, raised himself to a sitting posture. He was chained at the wrists, at the ankles, with a connecting chain which ran from the hands to the feet and thence to a great ring which was attached to a bolt that sank into the stone wall.

"Ah, Tizzo," said Melrose, "have you changed sides, made peace with your enemies, and made yourself snug in Perugia again?"

"I am here in Perugia again, my lord," said Tizzo. "But only to take you away with me."

The baron closed his eyes and nodded his head with a strange smile.

"Ah, is that it?" he said. "Here in Perugia? And to take me away?"

Tizzo threw back the cloak. He leaned the great woodsman's ax against the wall and showed the file.

"This is the way to cut the Gordian knot," he said.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Melrose opened his eyes, looked at the file, and shook his grizzled head.

"It won't do, Tizzo," he said. "You're going to walk me out of the prison. Isn't that the thought?"

"And why not?" said Tizzo.

"Can you find a way back for yourself?"

"I think so."

"Then find it now, and use it."

"What?"

"I shall not go with you."

"My lord?"

"Damn my lord," said the Englishman. "What made you come here in the first place?"

"You taught me what to do when a friend is in trouble," said Tizzo.

"In what way?"

"I have not forgotten the day you entered Perugia and risked your head in order to set mine in freedom."

"Ah, I remember something about that," said Melrose. "And that good fellow, that Giovan Paolo, not only set you free but refused to take my life in payment for yours, though he knew that I was a lifelong servant of the Oddi, whom he has reason to hate."

"Giovan Paolo is my sworn brother," said Tizzo. "And chiefly because of what he did that day. If there were a way for him to break into Perugia suddenly, I should not have had to slip into the town by stealth. We should have bought you by our work in battle, my lord."

"Perhaps you would," said Melrose. "But I rather think that Jeronimo della Penna would have used an extra five minutes to run down into his cellar, when he saw the day—or the night—was lost. He would have used that time to come down and put a knife into me. The bottles of wine in his cellar, Tizzo, are not half so dear to him as all the revenge which he opens, like a sweet perfume, when he sees me."

"Why does he hate you, my lord? Because Giovan Paolo slipped through the gate you were guarding?"

"And the Lady Beatrice—and you. Mostly because of you, Tizzo. The fact is that he hates you a little more than he hates the rest of the world because, as he says, you cheated him. You pretended to be on his side."

TIZZO dropped to one knee and began to use the file on the heavy manacles that linked the wrists of the prisoner together.

"It is no use, Tizzo," said the prisoner.

"No use?" exclaimed Tizzo, looking up in astonishment.

"Not in the least. Do as I tell you. Leave the prison at once."

"Why is there no use in setting your hands free?"

"Because, my lad, even after they are free, I shall not be able to use them."

"I don't understand," said Tizzo, staring down at the deep, silver-shining trench which the file already had cut into the comparatively soft iron.

"Why, Tizzo, it means that I have paid a visit to the lady, yonder."

"What lady?"

"It has a good many names. Some people call it the engine of grace. Others call it the rack."

Tizzo, jerking his head about, stared at the double-wheeled length of the great rack, with the old, stiff cordage attached to it, and the terrible sliding beam in the center which could be moved by the wheel to any length. What fiendish brains ever had devised the rack, which pulls at the head and the feet of a man until from wrists to ankles the body is drawn taut and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

every tendon, every joint, contributes its note to the general symphony of exquisite agony. There was the pain to consider—there was also the deathless shame of the naked body which had to submit to the torments of the enemy.

He looked at that frightful instrument, whose name ran into all the nightmares of the age, and then back at the man who had suffered from it. He saw the seated figure bunched over, as though the backbone had no rigid strength. Part of the weight rested on the arms, and the arms shook under the burden. Those powerful arms in which a battle mace ordinarily was a toy, were now bending under the elbows. A bed-ridden old man could not have been more feeble. The head of the baron thrust out on his thick neck. Pain devoured his eyes. But still he managed some sort of a smile.

And Tizzo, groaning aloud, said: "God, God! Why have I come a day too late?"

"The rascal Marignello required time as well as money," said the prisoner. "But a day ago you would not have found me here. I was in a cell on the tier above. This morning della Penna decided to begin spinning out my death in a long, thin thread. He stood over me during the torment. He kept feeling the hardness of my shoulders and thighs as the strain of the rack grew greater. He kept telling them to go more slowly, more tenderly. Tenderly was the word he used, laughing. He laughed, and told them to use me more tenderly. Stretch the beef today and cut it up tomorrow. He stood over me with the rod of iron, ready to tap some of my bones and break them, but that was a temptation he resisted. Tomorrow he will break an arm. The next day a leg. Then another arm. Then a few ribs. What, Tizzo? Would a connoisseur swallow off his wine? No, he would taste it slowly, rolling the drops over his tongue and up against his palate."

"God curse and strike him!" said Tizzo.

"Not God. *You* must strike him," said the baron. "I tell you, Tizzo, that I could not walk from the prison, even with all the doors thrown open. I could hardly crawl or writhe along like a snake. A snail would be faster than I. You are not a mule to carry me hence. Therefore, escape, yourself, as you may. And afterwards, if Giovan Paolo takes the city, strike no blow except at Jeronimo della Penna. Strike only for his head. Beat him down. And for every stroke that maims him, that slays him by degrees, cry my name. Cry 'Melrose!' while you enjoy the killing of him. That will be a comfort to my soul, no matter how deep in hell I am hidden away. I shall hear every word you utter. I shall taste every drop of his blood. I shall laugh at hell-fire as della Penna dies."

"I shall kill him afterwards," said Tizzo. "God knows that I shall kill him, but now there is only one task."

HE gripped the wrist irons and began to file at them, furiously. And the noise was like that of the singing of a mosquito in the torture chamber.

"Take care of what you do!" said Melrose. "If you throw yourself away, I am cheated of my revenge. Listen to me, Tizzo. If I even dream that revenge will fill its belly with the life of della Penna, I can endure everything. For every pang he gives me, I can laugh loud and long, because I shall promise myself that he will die by worse pains afterwards. And, be-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing a coward, he will taste every agony thrice over. My death will only enrich me, if I can hope that he will die afterwards, and by your hand, my noble friend."

Tizzo said nothing. He merely set his teeth, and the file turned the iron of the manacles hot as it bit into the metal.

"Tizzo!" exclaimed Melrose. "If ever we fought together, and if ever I taught you the innermost secrets of my sword-craft, I beseech you, leave me—save your life—do not cast yourself away in trying to help a hopeless wreck from the reef. I shall only sink, myself, and draw you down after me."

"The courtyard of Marozzo," said Tizzo, "and my own life bleeding away, and Marozzo ordering more of his men to fight with me, and then the entrance of Astorre and Giovan Paolo, with you—you who had given up your life in order to pay down a price that would ransom me. God! Do you think I have forgotten?"

"Ah, you remember that?" said Melrose.

"Aye. I remember."

"And another thing?"

"When I first saw you," said Tizzo, "I knew, suddenly, that I had met the man I wished to follow around the world."

"Like a young, impressionable, silly fool," said the Englishman. "I have received nothing from the world but blows and I have paid my reckoning in the same coin."

Then he added: "Tizzo, I ask one boon of you."

"I shall not grant it," said Tizzo.

He asked, in his turn: "But tell me what angel drew you on, my lord? What made you, in the first place, risk your life in order to save mine?"

"An imp of the perverse, it seems," said Melrose, "that must have told me that if I risked my life in the first place I then should have the privilege of drawing the two of us down into perdition, as I am drawing us now. Do you hear me?"

"Rather," said Tizzo, "an angel of heaven who told you that death is an easy thing, when there are two friends to endure it."

"Friends?" said the baron, loudly and suddenly. "Well, call it that—"

But as he said this, there was a dim sound of steps in the corridor outside, and then a wrangling of iron at the door to the torture chamber.

"They have come to take me to the finish," said Melrose. "Jeronimo could not wait any longer. His appetite was greater than his patience. But, ah, God, that he should find two morsels to swallow instead of one!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEARCH.

TIZZO, fingering his ax, looked desperately towards the door.

The quick, soft voice of Melrose stopped him.

"No, no! Tizzo, you may strike down one or two but the mob will kill you. They'll worry you to death. You are trapped. But no man is dead to hope while there is still breath in him. Do you hear? Out with the lantern. Roll in under the old straw, here. They shall not find you, if God is willing!"

The key was already grating in the lock when Tizzo, letting the commands of the baron take the place of his own thought, blew out the lantern and slid into the straw. There he lay flat, turning his face so that it dropped on the cold side of his ax.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Above him, he heard certain rustlings, and felt the straw being straightened by the manacled hands of the baron. Then a crushing weight fell on him, as Melrose must have straightened out and laid his body directly down across the hidden bulk of Tizzo.

The door had flung open and a faint gust of the stale air blew even through the straw to the nostrils of Tizzo, casting up dust that gave him an agonizing desire to sneeze.

But footfalls were pouring into the room. And he heard the deadly jangling of naked steel, and the queer humming, muffled noise of blades against scabbards.

Then Jeronimo della Penna cried out: "Look everywhere. If he was not above, he may be here!"

It was the voice of Marozzo that broke in: "He *must* be here because he goes to his work as straight as a ferret to blood—a ferret to the throat of a rabbit. Look well. I, from my own purse—a hundred florins of gold—do you hear, men? No, five hundred florins to the first fellow with sharp eyes who comes on the traces of the devil!"

To this Marignello's voice added: "He will not be here, my masters. I said nothing of the baron being here. I *knew* nothing of his being here. He was brought in here after I left the cellars."

Della Penna said: "Your work was worthless, Marignello. Your thoughts are worthless, also. By God, I have a thought to try you on the same rack that tried Melrose."

He added, loudly: "To your work! Look everywhere!"

It was hard for Tizzo to breathe, there was such a pressure upon his body. And then there came to him a queer reaction—that it was better to burst upright before their eyes, ax in hand, and strike right and left, dying like a man. It was better to do that than to lie here and be discovered like a crawling rat.

"Everywhere! He may hide himself in a beam of light!" said Marozzo.

The voice of Marozzo was recognizable, but this enunciation was much stifled. Plainly his mouth had been smashed and perhaps many of his teeth knocked in by the battering which Tizzo had given him.

Men were trampling all about the room, knocking against metal, bumping the walls.

Something whispered through the straw and grinded against the stone not an inch from his face.

"No use thrusting your sword into that bed," commanded della Penna. "Do you think that anything could be hidden under the bulk of Melrose without being stifled?"

And della Penna laughed as he spoke.

AFTER a moment that half-muffled voice of Marozzo said: "Is there any possible way by which he might have escaped from the house after he found that the cell of Melrose was empty?"

"No," said della Penna, "unless he went up the stairs and into the house itself. That could not be."

"Why not?"

"Because there are servants everywhere."

"Jeronimo, in God's name remember that we are talking of a man who could hide himself in the shadow of a cat, if he wished to do so."

"How could he escape through the front door, which is always guarded. In these days, I have a dozen men-at-arms at that door."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Numbers mean sleepy eyes," said Marozzo. "What of the window?"

"None except those twenty feet from the pavement outside."

"Ha! He could run down the perpendicular side of a wall!"

"Are you going to call him half fly and half cat?"

"And mostly devil!" cried Marozzo. "He is not here. Jeronimo, leave this place. Spread the alarm. Let the town be raised. God knows, if we can catch him, we have at a stroke secured half the strength of Giovan Paolo."

"You may be right," said della Penna.

He commanded someone to go at once and have an alarm rung, a word carried about the town to all the gates that Tizzo, not for the first time, had slunk inside the gates of Perugia. There was a rich reward on his head.

Then della Penna's voice sounded close by.

"Ah, Melrose," he said. "How is it with you?"

"Better, my lord," said Henry of Melrose. "I breathe the air and still can taste it. It is better than wine."

"Well, strangling might be a good end for you. I don't know. How do your joints feel, Melrose?"

"They ache with sympathy for you."

"For me?"

"Certainly, Jeronimo."

"I don't understand you—but then, I never could understand any man from the beef-eating English."

"Why, my lord, you are searching for Tizzo, are you not?" asked Melrose.

"What of it?"

"Nothing. It is merely a token."

"A token of what?"

"That you have named the wasp who will sting you to death."

"Damn you!" snarled della Penna, and Tizzo heard the sound of a blow that reëchoed through his brain. Had della Penna struck that chained and helpless man?

"Well and knightly done," said Melrose. "Your servants watch you, Jeronimo. They learn how men of noble birth should treat one another."

"I have a mind to give you another taste of the rack at this moment," declared della Penna.

"Give me enough tastes of it, close enough together, and soon I shall have a mouthful."

"Do you hear him?" said della Penna. "He means that if I give him enough of it I shall soon have him dead. D'you know, Melrose, that if you were of a little different pattern, I would like to have you around me. But since I can't buy you, I shall have to bury you."

"It is one of the pities of the wars," answered Melrose. "We are not able to love the sort of poison that might physic us."

"Good again," laughed della Penna. "I shall return to you again tomorrow, and the rack may even sharpen your wit a little more. Come, my lads. Out of this, and run through the house. Search in every corner. Remember, he can make himself as small as a rat."

Then he added: "Put irons on Marignello. I shall have some use for the rack with him, tomorrow, also."

CHAPTER IX.

TIZZO'S FATHER.

THE door closed, the lock grated.

"The way is open, Tizzo," said the baron softly.

Tizzo wriggled into the open and began to blow out air through his nose,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and to wipe the chaff and dust from his hair, from his face, from his eyes. He dusted himself all over.

"Neat as a cat," said the baron. "Was it hard on you, Tizzo?"

"There are thirty excess pounds of you, my lord," said Tizzo, "and I felt the weight of all of them. However, I can breathe again now. I swear to God that for a moment I was about to leap out and try for the head of della Penna with my ax."

"Wrong, Tizzo," said the baron. "Consider what a masterpiece he is, what a perfect semblance, picture, statue, harmony of evil! There is a man without charity or kindness, without decency or gentleness, without courtesy or heart, courage or warmth. A mere brain. A fox. A cold fire. Where will you find him again? Where is there his like? Merely to be killed by such a man is to be remembered by history. To be listed among his victims saves a man from oblivion. No, no, Tizzo, thank God that your eyes have seen such a prodigy."

"He is a prodigy," said Tizzo, "and I pray that I may have the prodigious pleasure of killing him."

He resumed his work with his file, and in two strokes of it cut through one of the manacle irons. With the edge of the ax he pried the bracelet wide open at that mouth and let the hand of the Englishman escape.

He fell to work on the other hand-iron when the baron said: "Hush! Do you hear it?"

Tizzo, listening for a moment, started violently.

"They are coming again!" he muttered.

"No. They are walking on guard outside the door. You have startled them, Tizzo, and now they are worried. They fear that you and the devil may come romping, hand in hand, down those stairs, yonder, ready to beat open the door and fly away with me in a cloud of red smoke. They have, in fact, corked the bottle; and inside that bottle you are to die!"

"True!" said Tizzo.

He stood up and stared at the door.

"Tell me, now," asked Melrose. "This is the end. There is no possible escape. Day and night that door will be guarded. And this means that you must surely die. So tell me now how great is your regret that you have come here for a foreigner, a mere Englishman from the barbarous north?"

Tizzo said: "Are you tempting me to use some fine words? Well, my lord, I'll only say that so long as I die in company, with a friend, I cannot ask any more of my life."

"What is better than a friend?" asked Melrose.

"A blood relation, but I have none."

"Are you sure?"

"My mother is dead, my lord, as I think I told you. There was never a father to me."

"Do you remember your mother, Tizzo?"

"I was a very young child when she died."

"Shall I describe her?"

"You, my lord?"

"A tall, slender girl. Brown-eyed, Tizzo. The grace of a wild deer and the step of a faun. A sweet smile and a gentle heart. A face as calm as prayer. Laughter as bright as the first spring day. And a faith that would have stirred a god and shamed a devil."

"Did you know her?"

"Do I speak as though I were ignorant, Tizzo?"

"No, my lord."

"Shall I tell you more about her?"

"Every word is like a life to me!"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"She was a girl so good that she could not expect villainy in others."

"I have seen such people," said Tizzo.

"There are tears in your eyes, Tizzo."

"Well, let them fall, also," said Tizzo. "I am not ashamed to weep for her. I would have died for her, if God had granted me that much grace."

"Instead of which, she died for you."

"Is that true?"

"Yes. You being born out of wedlock, the hate and the scorn of others killed her quickly."

TIZZO covered his face. Then he said: "If I could find the demi-devil, the villain who betrayed her—"

"What would you do?"

"He would be my father," said Tizzo. "I could only—I could only—curse him and leave him!"

"Aye, perhaps."

"Did you know him?"

"I knew him very well."

"Tell me of him, then."

"That knowledge would only poison your last moments. Tizzo, you are about to die! You should be on your knees, praying."

"I was never a praying fellow," said Tizzo. "I would rather listen to a story, even if it is about a villain."

The baron shook his gray head, without smiling.

"This Englishman—" he began.

"Ah, it was an Englishman?" exclaimed Tizzo.

"Yes. I told you that he was my friend."

"Am I half English?" murmured Tizzo, looking down at himself in wonder.

"Aye. Half at least."

"That is where I caught the red hair?"

"Your mother's hair was black as the wing of a raven."

"Dear God, if I had only known her!"

"But shall I tell you more about your father?"

"Yes. I almost half forgive him if he was a true friend of yours."

"I said he was a friend, but very often he was a bad companion."

"Ah?"

"I mean, Tizzo, that there was no constancy to him."

"That is a bad vice," said Tizzo, gravely.

"It is," said the baron. "That fellow would sometimes be serious and sometimes laughing. Out of his laughter he might fall to brawling, and out of his seriousness he might fall to laughing. I never could tell what he would do next."

"A wild, evil man?" said Tizzo.

"A dancing, drinking, dicing, fighting man," said the baron.

"For all of those sins, God forgive me!" said Tizzo, sadly. "Now I know from whom I inherit them. Was he cruel?"

"In battle? Yes. Otherwise, no, I should say not. Merciful enough."

"Charitable?"

"In this way—that he found it hard to refuse a request. If he won a man's money, he was apt to give half of it back if the fellow laughed at the loss and showed himself a good fellow."

"I like that," said Tizzo, adding up the points. "Yes, I like that a great deal. And brave?" he asked, catching his breath a little in a dreadful doubt.

"Brave? Men called him brave," said the baron. "That is to say, this Englishman I tell you of was a fellow who loved danger as some men love a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

partner at a dance. He was accustomed to brawling. Sword-shine was more often in his eyes than daylight. He was used to danger, and therefore he loved it for the sake of old neighborliness."

"Ah?" said Tizzo, smiling suddenly. "I wish that I could have seen him! What was his blood?"

"He was of an old and noble name."

Tizzo braced back his shoulders and frowned.

"Good, also!" he said.

Then he asked: "And my mother—did he love her?"

"So much, Tizzo, that when he heard of her death he fell on the ground and beat his head against it. He was half mad for many days."

"Was he? Was he in fact?" said Tizzo. "Ah, God, who is to judge the sins of others—who that is as sinful as myself? He was young; she was young; they loved one another. And if they missed the priest—"

"True," said the baron.

"A brave, kind, wild man," said Tizzo.

"I would not praise him too highly. He knew no books. Nothing but battle. I have seen him as savage as a mad dog, as headlong as a fighting stallion, as drunk as a fool, and as cruel as a tiger."

"What shall I think of him?" said Tizzo. "What did *you* think of him?"

"I have prayed God to forgive his sins. He is still alive."

"Alive! In the name of Heaven, tell me his name!"

"It will give a point to your hatred of him."

"I cannot hate my flesh and blood," said Tizzo. "Tell me his name!"

"His name," said the baron, "is Henry, Baron of Melrose."

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

Stopped by Locusts

SO thick are the locusts of upper India, some years they will stop a train. Piles of their greasy bodies cover the tracks and make the wheels slip; sometimes the train can't get up a hill at all.

J. W. Holden.

"REAL SHAVING COMFORT NEVER COST ME SO LITTLE!"

"I never dreamed a low-priced blade could shave a tough beard like mine until I tried Probak Jr." writes T. C. Schreiber, Jr. "Now I get clean, easy shaves with never a bit of irritation and I'm saving money on razor blades."

Get the benefit of unequalled manufacturing methods—automatic tempering, grinding, honing and stropping. Enjoy real shaving comfort at lowest possible cost. Try Probak Jr.

Probak Junior is a product of Gillette and fits all Gillette and Probak razors.

NOW! PROBAK JUNIOR 4 BLADES FOR 10¢!

Also packages of 10 blades for 25c and 25 blades for 59c at your dealer.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Over the Dragon Wall

Long Novelette

By LORING BRENT

Author of "Kingdom of the Lost," "The Sapphire Death," etc.

CHAPTER I.

"SHE LIVES!"

THE glitter of the ugly little idol arrested the young American in mid-stride. He stopped, bent down and peered through the window of Ko Chang's jade shop.

Here, if he wasn't mistaken, was a treasure: a specimen of plum-blossom jade beautifully carved into the likeness of the Chinese god of wrath.

It should have been in one of the world's great jade collections. Wondering if the proprietor knew its worth, the tall young American went into the shop, a dimly-lighted place that smelled a century old.

Ko Chang, it quickly developed, was well aware of the worth of that bit of carved plum-blossom jade. It was not for sale. It was, he cheerfully admitted, nothing but a lure—and would the young masta seatee him and lookee-see other velly fine otticals?

The tall young American informed Ko Chang, in fluent and flowery Cantonese—for all this occurred in the busy port of Hong Kong—that he was the thrice-accursed offspring of a turnip, and that his ancestors had spent their lives filching coppers from the eyelids of the dead.

Ko Chang, who was old and fat and amiable, chuckled throughout this indictment, then fetched other items of merit. But the American was not interested in a Ming vase mended with gold, or a perfume bottle carved from a single white opal, or the rose quartz chop of an emperor.

He wanted the God of Wrath. Ko

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

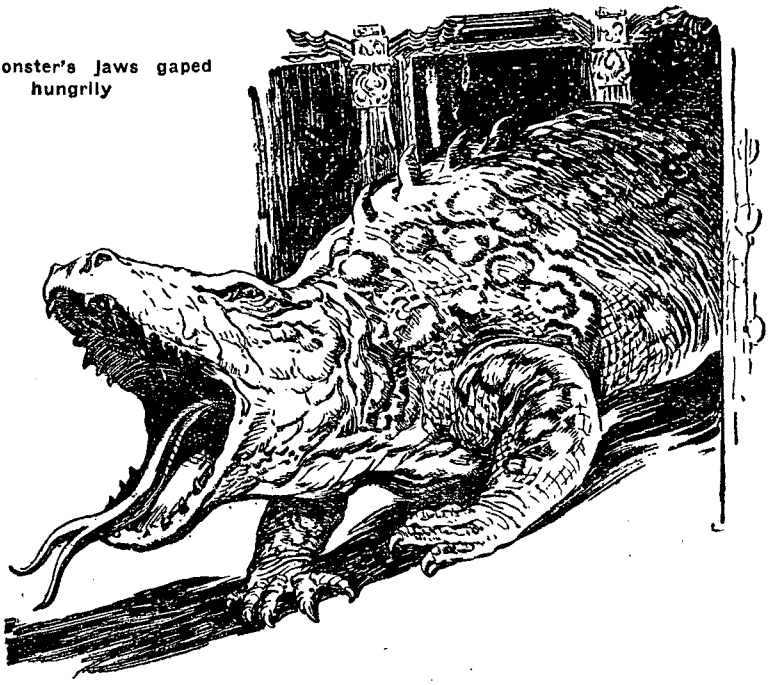
Chang, smiling benevolently, waddled to the rear of his shop for more treasures in miniature.

The American did not see a gray figure slip in from the street—a figure as gray as the fog from which it might have detached itself—and slide a small flat greenish object along the counter toward his elbow. In fact, the American was unaware that this creature of the fog had come and gone, so swift, so stealthy had he been.

But he presently became aware of the flat little object the mysterious unseen one had left behind. It was a perfectly round disc of about the size and thickness of a silver dollar. It was pale green in color and was probably one of the many cheap Japanese imitations of jade.

One side of the stone disc was smooth. On the other had been hastily engraved two Chinese symbols. It looked at a quick glance like a good luck charm, and the symbols might have meant long life or happiness or any of a number of such banal sentiments. But these characters spelled nothing of the kind. They conveyed sharply to the young man's startled brain the concise message: *She Lives!*

The young man snatched up the imitation jade disc and brought his fist smashing down on the counter. Ko



The monster's jaws gaped hungrily

A dragon, green as an emerald, that ate men, was destined to shock Peter the Brazen into the most stupendous surprise of his life

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Chang came waddling, a beaming smile at his full lips, a gleam of silver in his hand.

The American sprang up. His face, gray and haggard a moment ago, was flushed with anger and his eyes were sapphires of dancing wrath.

"What thing?" he snapped

The shop keeper stared at the pale green disc and, with a puzzled air, shook his head. "My no savvy."

"Why did you putee it my?" the young man shouted.

"But I did not putee it you, masta!"

Ko Chang stepped back a little, for the American had the look in his blue eyes of a man who might become dangerously violent. Savagely, he threw the disc of imitation jade to the stone floor, but there was evidently little satisfaction for him in seeing it break into a dozen fragments, for his eyes did not change, nor did his face lose its threatening dark look. He strode out of the jade shop, leaving Ko Chang staring after his broad back with beady, bulging eyes.

HE strode through the dusk of Hong Kong, blind to the beauties of the south China evening, softened by the thinning mist—the purpling sky, the lights sparkling like fabulous jewels flung down from the eminence of the Peak.

He strode to and into the nearest bar. It was cocktail hour in Hong Kong. Frosty shakers were singing their tinkling songs. Voices were raised in laughter and convivial conversation.

The American found a place at the bar and ordered a Scotch and soda. A voice behind him boomed: "Pete Moore! You big palooka—just the man I'm looking for!"

Peter Moore turned. A tall, bronzed man of about his age was reaching for his hand. He said without enthusiasm, "Hello, Fordyce."

He had never liked Jim Fordyce, a rich man's son who had been sent to China to occupy an unimportant post in his father's banking house. He had once seen Fordyce strike a rickshaw coolie with his stick, and Moore had little use for that breed of American.

"I heard you were in town," Fordyce was saying.

"What will you drink?"

"A daiquiri."

Moore gave the order to the barman and Fordyce said, "My sister and my fiancée just came in on the Empress of Britain. They've both heard all about you. Dying to know you. You never met Doris, did you?"

"Doris?"

"My little sister. You'll love Doris. She's just your type. Loves adventure—any kind of excitement. Oh, she'll eat you alive. We'll have dinner, then go down to Recourse and dance. What, what?"

"I'm sorry," the other began.

"Now, now, now! Don't go and get pious on me, Pete. You're not doing a damned thing, or you wouldn't be here drinking alone. Nasty habit, drinking alone. I never drink alone except the first two hours after I get up. Doris is a grand little egg, even if she is my own sister. And she isn't a prude. The chances are, she'll be in your lap an hour after she knows you. She's the demonstrative type. Is it a date?"

"I'm sorry."

The somewhat blurred gray eyes of the other American became a little sharper as they centered on Moore's face. Fordyce swiftly acquired the ugly look of the spoiled only son when thwarted. He became nasty.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What's happened to you? Have you been sick? You look like hell!"

Moore, with his gaunt eyes and tragic, embittered mouth, looked haggard, old. He said nothing. Fordyce, still staring hard at his face, cried: "Say! What's become of that little American cutey you were running around with—the one with that big pile of money? O'Gilvie, that's it! Susan O'Gilvie! I'm glad to see you've given her the air. With all her money, she was nothing but a little bum."

Peter Moore's right fist snapped in an arc to the Fordyce mouth. He had sensed it would happen. It had to happen. He had supposed that people had talked about him and Susan O'Gilvie, for with her wealth and her capacity for dangerous mischief, it was inevitable that she be discussed. He could not yet bear to hear her name mentioned, and Jim Fordyce's insult had released a little of the desperate fury corked up in him.

There was an instant of confusion in which he saw Jim Fordyce stretched out on the floor, blinking up at him, with blood trickling from his mouth. Men seemed to be milling about. Then a tall Mongolian with a scar—the Hong Kong version of a bouncer—came pushing through the crowd. When he laid rough hands on Peter Moore, the young man slugged him, too. And in the greater confusion made his way to the street.

He was sorry he had acted so hastily.

He wasn't in the habit of going about punching people. Yet Fordyce had had it coming.

HE proceeded to his hotel, the Colonial. He knew he should not be living on such a lavish scale. His funds were almost gone. Soon he would have to begin casting about for some means of livelihood. Yet, in the passing months since Susan had killed herself, he had lost all passion for life and all respect for death. For life without Susan, her loveliness, her lively companionship, had proved barren and bitter.

As he entered the lobby, a gray-haired man arose from a chair and came toward him, faintly smiling—a short, brisk man with a round, ruddy countenance and twinkling eyes. He appeared to be about fifty-five, and Moore might have been amused could he have known that this chubby, merry-looking, middle-aged person was little less than a handmaiden of destiny.

He said, in a cheerful voice, "You're Peter Moore, aren't you?"

Moore stopped. "Yes." The round beaming face was vaguely familiar.

"Do you remember meeting me in Shanghai a couple of years ago? I'm Judd Burton. There was a little unpleasantness with a number of Japanese soldiers. Specifically, they shoved me and the lady who was with me off a sidewalk and into the mud. Then a Jap sergeant insulted us—and you took a hand. Remember?"

Peter Moore nodded. He had forgotten all of that incident but the insolence of the Japanese sergeant and the indignation of a middle-aged American gentleman and an elderly woman who were standing in mud to their ankles.

"You showed us some nice jujutsu, and you said your name was Peter Moore, but it didn't mean anything at the time. Since then, it seems to me I've heard your name everywhere I've turned."

Peter Moore dryly remarked: "I'm

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supposed to be a pretty shady character."

Mr. Burton looked amused and he made a grave statement. "My business is collecting wild animals."

Moore smiled. "And you want me for your collection?"

"The truth is, I have a very difficult job for someone, and I believe you are the only man in the Far East capable of doing it. Shall we have a drink and discuss it?"

Peter Moore assented. They went into the bar. In a secluded corner, over a table adorned with two highballs, Judd Burton went into detail.

"I'll admit, I've had you checked up," he said. "I heard plenty about your courage, your daredevil feats, and—I hope you will accept my deepest condolences for the death of Miss O'Gilvie."

The young man sharply interrupted: "What did you hear about her?"

"Very little, Mr. Moore. I heard that she was, at the time of her death, the richest young woman in America, if not in the world. And that she had gone into adventuring in a big way in the Far East, and that you had sometimes, quite magically, succeeded in getting her out of a number of very dangerous scrapes.

"And I heard that she had somehow lost her life in a strange place in the north of Indo-China."

"A valley of death," Moore amended moodily. "With only one avenue of escape—a tunnel, full of bronze gates, at the dead end. She climbed a tower in the top of which were the gate controls." The young man's eyes were bleak with that dreadful memory.

"She opened the gates and then she jumped from that tower so the rest of us could get away."

"How horrible! Who lives in this valley?"

"A race of inbred human monsters—thousands of them." Moore hesitated. His eyes were rather wild. "I gave my word I'd never breathe a word about that place, but I can't help it. I'm losing my mind. I've got to talk about it."

HIS voice had risen to the point where other men in the bar were turning to stare. He became aware of this and stopped, glaring down at his clenched fists on the table. He snatched up the highball glass and swiftly drained it.

"You can be sure," the older man said, "I'll respect your confidence. Get it off your chest. Waiter—two more."

Peter Moore talked. He described the voyage of the mysterious ship which had taken him and Susan, both virtually prisoners, to that hateful valley; he told Mr. Burton of the soulless beings who inhabited this valley—these horrible slaves who had been ruled for centuries by descendants of the original Hassan Barbarossa, the Mediterranean pirate who had established a hidden kingdom there. And he related the dramatic story of his escape from that monstrous place.

"I bottled it up," he said in a low, venomous voice. "I jammed the sea gates by sinking their ship across the entrance. None of them will ever escape! The thousands of them will die like rats. Without food, without salt, they can't live!"

Once again, Moore's voice had risen with the emotion of that shocking narrative. Once again, he got himself under control.

His eyes were as fixed, as lusterless as those of a dead man.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Exhausted by the emotion of that experience re-lived, he said huskily, with irony, "Mr. Burton, you're enjoying the privilege of looking at a man who has murdered a half million people!"

Judd Burton, staring at him with fascination, vigorously shook his gray head. "No, Peter," he said gently. "I can't look at it that way. You deserve nothing but sympathy. I think," he went on more briskly, "I have something to take your mind off that ghastly experience. What are your plans?"

The young man shrugged.

"Then mine may interest you. I want to secure some sensational animal freak for the C. C. A. Something that will—"

"The C. C. A.?"

"Consolidated Circuses of America. Actually, this isn't up my street. I supply circuses and zoölogical gardens with animals and reptiles of all descriptions—but normal, run-of-the-mill specimens—tigers, elephants, snakes. This is an exceptional situation, calling for exceptional skill. You may know that the circus business in America has fallen upon very lean years, due to the depression, the movies, the radio and other changes in the national life. Circuses have to fight to keep alive—to attract the crowds. They even shoot men from cannons. Nothing is sensational enough. And I'm here to find something exceptionally sensational for the Consolidated sideshow department.

"It must be something the press agents can play up to the limit—something that will attract people in mobs."

"Quite a large order," Peter commented.

"I've found it!" The animal collector paused to sip his drink and light a cigar. He exhaled rich blue smoke and whispered: "It's a dragon!"

PETER MOORE'S clear blue eyes regarded him over the top of his highball glass, but the young man made no comment.

"A real Chinese dragon!" Mr. Burton declared. "As green as an emerald! And it's not a croc and it's not a 'gator. You don't believe it!"

"Perhaps I never happened to drink the right kind of liquor."

"It's a temple dragon," the animal collector explained. "And I've checked up on it. It's alive. It can't be wholly a fake. Too many people have reported it to me—and the reports jibe! I've convinced myself that it exists."

"Where?" Moore asked quietly.

"It's a hill temple in a big town—a city to the west of Indo-China, on the fringe of eastern Tibet, actually in the Himalayan foothills. Ever hear of Sandrakar?"

"Yes."

"Ever been there?"

"No."

"It's the Moon tribe, a branch of the Moosars, mixed with Tibetan."

"I know that tribe. Some of them are tree pygmies."

"These men aren't pygmies. They're big men—pale yellow men. And devilishly clever and as barbaric as a Chinese execution. What I've heard about this beast, this so-called dragon, convinces me that it's unusual—a true freak, what scientists call a sport. Maybe it's a throwback to the dinosaur age. Maybe it's painted green. I don't care. Too many natives have brought me reports on it."

"Any white men?" Moore interrupted.

"No white men." Mr. Burton's polished blue eyes became a little nar-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

row. It gave him an effect of shrewdness. "It's dangerous territory for white men. If it weren't, I wouldn't be trying to enlist your aid. The description, briefly, is this: the monster is emerald green, or grass green, perhaps twenty feet long, perhaps a little under that, and twice a year it becomes white hot."

"And it's alive?" the other murmured.

"Absolutely alive! Mind you, Moore, I don't say this description is accurate. It is a sacred animal—the central figure of a comparatively new but powerful religion—an abortive kind of Buddhism."

"Then no man could get it out alive," Moore said flatly.

Mr. Burton nodded understandingly. "I've heard about some of your adventures with strange oriental religions. Yet you took chances as great as this—and came out alive."

"Not with a twenty-foot white-hot dragon."

The older man laughed nervously. "It's worth trying, son. It's probably as dangerous as any expedition you ever embarked on. It should appeal to you. Certainly, it will snap you out of your doldrums."

"And it probably isn't a dragon," Moore argued.

"I DON'T care a damn what it is. I want it. I'm convinced it's a freak, a sport. Here, briefly, is my proposition. I will place ten thousand dollars, in American money, in escrow in the Bank of Hong Kong, payable to you on delivery alive in Hong Kong of this creature, whatever it is. In addition, I will advance you, on your word that you will undertake the expedition, a sum of five thousand Mex for expenses. If it proves to be a croc or a 'gator, painted green, then I lose. But I don't expect to lose. The Moosar country—the lower country—is a 'gator and crocodile infested region. Those people aren't going to nominate a croc or a 'gator for a new god."

Mr. Burton, flushed from the exertions of persuasion, drank the rest of his highball and ordered two more. His eyes were shining now with the eagerness of a high pressure salesman.

"And you won't go at it single-handed," he went on. "I've arranged for the best help you could possibly have. In the village of Khava, about thirty miles from Sandrakar, a man named Charlie Ling is now camped with a caravan of fifteen elephants and upwards of forty mahouts, gun bearers, beaters, and roustabouts. Charlie Ling procures most of my Burmese and Siamese specimens for me. He is courageous, dependable, and absolutely loyal."

"What's his nationality?"

"Eurasian. Chinese and English."

The light of interest in the young American's eyes faded. Judd Burton saw it fade. He leaned forward with an earnest air.

"I know how you feel about Eurasians. They're ordinarily cowardly and treacherous and lazy. Not Charlie Ling. He's an exceptional fellow. I've had him for fifteen years. He's been through countless jams with me. You can count on Charlie Ling. He has saved my life. He has saved me from crooks and footpads and thieves. He is a man you can trust without stint or limit. He will obey your orders implicitly. I will give you letters to him, of course."

Mr. Burton paused again, with his shrewd eyes on the adventurer's lean, hard, tanned face. Evidently the ani-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mal collector was not reassured by what he saw there, for he cried, "Now — now — now! Before you make a negative answer—and I'm afraid I can see it in your eyes—let

PETER MOORE

me make a fatherly suggestion. I know how you must feel over the loss of your fiancée. Wouldn't you really be happier, easier in your mind, if you were in action—matching your wits once again with difficulties and dangers?"

"I've lost my respect for danger."

Mr. Burton's flexible features were swiftly mobilized into an expression of deep concern. "I don't want you to walk deliberately into suicide!" he said sharply.

"I have no intention of committing suicide."

The animal collector seemed relieved. He grinned and said, "That's better, Peter! You'll get some good healthy excitement, going over the wall for that dragon!"

And Peter said, as if to himself, "Over the dragon wall!"

"Yes, I know that expression," Mr. Burton said hastily. "It's Chinese for death—the act of dying. But there's another meaning—the ascent to any earthly plane of happiness."

"Will I find that," Peter asked gravely, "on the other side of that wall?"

Mr. Burton chuckled. "You'll certainly find excitement, which is one form of happiness. Will you go after my dragon—matching your wits, once again, with dangers—difficulties?"

Peter hesitated a moment longer. Then, "Yes," he said crisply.

It was because of the obvious risks involved that Peter actually decided to undertake this strange mission—to attempt to steal and deliver in Hong Kong a twenty-foot dragon, green as an emerald, that ate men and twice a year became white hot!

CHAPTER II.

SUSAN'S ESCAPE.

FOR Susan O'Gilvie—gay, beautiful, mischievous Susan — for whom he had been mourning these past six months—was not dead. And the manner of her escape from the Kingdom of the Lost was even more amazing than the fact of her existence.

To Peter Moore, her death had been a matter of utmost certainty. He had seen her race up the spiral stairway of the tower—that fantastic pillar of stone called the tower of whirling ecstasy—had seen her emerge, in her green ceremonial robes, on the little floor at the top of the tower. He had seen her whirl about and topple from the edge, and he had assumed that she had plunged to her death on the barbed iron spears set into the ground far below. Actually, he had not seen her fall. He had shut his eyes, and he had heard

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a gasp from the thousands who were watching. He had thought that this great sigh emitted by that multitude had been one of horror and regret at her doom. But he had not seen the first of the Barbarossa soldiers, swarming up the stairway, reach the top of the tower; had not seen one of these men race out, reach out at peril of his own life to grasp a fold of the green gown the instant Susan O'Gilvie fell. Thus, he did not know that the vast sigh, the gasping of thousands of throats, was one of relief at her miraculous salvation.

He had presumed she was dead before he and the two others with whom he had escaped from that valley of horrors had reached the narrow tunnel which led to liberty. He only knew that she had killed herself, sacrificed herself, so that he and those others might escape.

That interval had been, in fact, one of sick confusion to Peter Moore. He had escaped through the tunnel, and he had sealed the one escape from the valley forever by ramming the great bronze sea gates with the Barbarossas' ship—sinking the ship against those gates so that they could never again be opened. To him, it had not been murder—the penning up forever of those half million human monsters. It had been the sealing of the tomb of the only woman he had ever loved.

Susan O'Gilvie, in his heart, would never die. But in his mind, in his embittered thoughts, she was dead. In his mind's eye, a thousand times, he had seen that slim, beloved figure falling through the air to sudden, shocking death. Her escape from the death he had pictured so morosely so many times, and her escape from the dread valley constituted a chapter of miracles.

Thousands saw that soldier seize the fold of her green gown, snatch her back from the brink of oblivion. Among them was a Burmese, a prisoner on the other side of the great wall which divided the valley, with its unscalable, cliff-like sides, into two unequal parts —the smaller part where the rulers lived, and the larger part, where the innumerable slaves of the Barbarossas existed like animals.

This Burmese was called Lak Lon. He was an old, old man, a white-bearded, rheumy-eyed old man from the Province of Tashwar, in northern Burma. Five years previously he had been captured from a Malayan felucca by the raiding ship of the Barbarossas. He had been on an errand for his master, the sultan Pra Ki Saludin, of Tashwar. He had been brought into the Kingdom of the Lost aboard the Barbarossas' raider—a true raider of the deep—and consigned to the living death of the human animals who lived on the "other side" of the great wall.

In spite of his age, his white beard, his palsy, Lak Lon was shrewd and clever. And since the moment of his imprisonment, he had been perfecting a plan of escape from this hideous place. This plan, it chanced, was ripe—quite ripe—on the day when Peter Moore and the two whom he had helped escape made good their getaway through the tunnel and forever sealed up the only exit from the valley.

Old Lak Lon had watched the slender girl in green run up the spiral steps and into the control room of the tower. He knew about that machinery, too. Because of the excitement about him, he knew that the girl in green was racing to the control room, and he knew presently that she had succeeded. He heard the shouts and cries of alarmed sentries on the great wall. He heard the uproar of the unseen people on the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other side of the wall as Peter Moore and his two friends made good their escape—the first time in the history of the valley that anyone had escaped.

Shrewdly, he reasoned that this girl had sacrificed herself to race up the stairs to the control room, to throw the great levers opening the series of bronze gates in the tunnel, so that someone else might escape.

HE saw this girl's attempt at suicide. And he saw presently that an even greater excitement was agitating the ruling class on the other side of the wall. Shortly the rumor reached the enslaved wretches, of which old Lak Lon was one—the terrifying rumor that those who had escaped through the tunnel had corked up this valley forever!

Having spent most of his life in the most turbulent state in the world, which is India, Lak Lon was accustomed to mob excitement, the frenzy of politico-religious mobs. Yet in all his life, he had never seen any mob behave quite so madly as this.

The half-idiots about him—the leprous, inhuman beasts, men and women and children, of which this great howling mass was composed—had passed that rumor from mouth to mouth, and all had lost what little reason was left to them.

The sealing up of that tunnel by those who had escaped meant that the valley was doomed—for through that tunnel trickled the valley's food supply, and almost as important as the food, the supply of salt without which this mob would soon be reduced to a state even lower than that to which it had attained.

Life could have meant but little to any of these poor wretches, yet their rabid protests against death proved how ferocious is the will to exist under even the most miserable circumstances.

They shrieked and howled. They ran about aimlessly, babbling. They flung themselves on the ground. Many of them engaged in fights to the death. The cries, howls, shrieks from their throats became a profane and dreadful roaring which shook the sultry air and reverberated in awful waves from precipice to precipice.

Then, leaderless, with a singleness of purpose that would have chilled the blood of the most fearless onlooker, they rushed at the great wall. The sentries had disappeared. The first wave of humanity broke, like the senseless wave of an ocean, against the wall. Others surged in after it, upon it. Others swarmed upon the fallen. Successive waves that followed reached the top of the wall and broke over it—this mass of screaming human monsters.

The little food, the little salt, remaining in the valley was in the possession of the Barbarossas.

Lak Lon was knocked down and trampled on when the mob first surged toward the great wall. He picked himself up and watched with the calm detachment of shrewd, wily old age. His plan was already taking form in his mind. He would escape, but not alone.

Except for the crippled, the blind, the dying, he was the last man left behind the wall. The gate, on the palace side, had been opened. He walked serenely through and into the forbidden territory. A few guns were blazing, but these few firearms in the possession of the rulers could have no more checked that flood of insane humanity than if it had been a tidal wave.

Lak Lon looked calmly, shrewdly over that mad scene. The palace and its grounds were almost invisible under the swarming slaves. They were go-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing in at doors and at windows. They were crawling up the façade. They reminded Lak Lon of so many starving lice.

HE was looking for the girl in green. His plans for her were very simple. If he returned to his sultan, after these five years of absence, no explanations, no excuses would be acceptable, and Lak Lon would lose cast, for Sultan Pra Ki Saludin was a monarch of very little imagination.

But if Lak Lon were to return to Tashwar with a beautiful white girl as a gift for Pra Ki Saludin, the sultan would require no explanation. For Pra Ki Saludin was a great admirer, a lover of beautiful women. He had many in his harem. And there was always room for one more. If Lak Lon could somehow deliver this beautiful girl in green to his master, Sultan Pra Ki Saludin would reward him fittingly, and life would be very pleasant for Lak Lon to the end of his days.

There, in a nutshell, was Lak Lon's plan. It remained only for him to find the girl in the green robes and to spirit her out of this dreadful valley.

Lak Lon found her, as he had hoped he might, at the base of the tower, where her rescuers had abandoned her when the rumor spread that the tunnel was forever closed.

She was unconscious—lying in a little crumpled heap where they had dropped her. Lak Lon studied the pale, beautiful face long and thoughtfully. And was delighted, for she was even more beautiful than he had hoped. He permitted himself a moment of great self-satisfaction. Yet he was quickly aware of his need for haste. For the time being, the mob, in its hysteria, thought only of food—food and salt. But the time would soon be here when a beautiful young girl would be in the greatest danger.

Kneeling down, he slapped her face briskly, and when she opened her eyes and stared up dazedly into his face, Lak Lon cried, in clear English: "Up! Up! We must escape!"

He helped her to her feet and Susan O'Gilvie stared with large, dazed eyes at the maddened scene about her. Yet it hardly registered on her senses. It was all, in truth, a meaningless confusion. A curtain had snapped across her brain. Her memory was gone. And the shock of her experience had numbed all the departments of her brain.

Only vaguely was she aware of any of this insane uproar and mob hysteria. Lak Lon, with his rheumy eyes, his tangled beard, his rags, his urgency to hurry, hurry—he, too, was the filament of a dream.

He had to help her most of the way. She did not remember passing through the gate and entering the dreary land on the other side of the great wall.

Her brain was clearing a little, but when she tried to think of what had happened beyond a few minutes ago, her brain refused to help her. She remembered being on top of a high tower with several strange, yelling men about her, men who looked alike, with strange, death-like faces. It was as if her life had begun at that point. She did not know who she was or what she was doing in this amazing place. She asked the hurrying old man beside her who he was, and he answered impatiently, "Lake Lon—hurry, hurry!"

And when she asked him what this place was and what she was doing in it, he only glanced at her sharply and made no reply.

"But who am I?" she cried.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His answer to that was a shrug, and: "We are what fate makes us. Hurry!"

She gave it up for the time being. The pace he was setting used all her breath, all her energy. The strangeness of the great valley frightened her, and her inability to remember the past made her want to cry.

IT seemed to her that they walked and walked for an immeasurable time. But at length they came to that part of the valley, half way between the wall and the farther end, which Lak Lon had studied all these years so cannily, observing a little niche here, a projecting rock there, in the fresh crevice, result of a slide, up which Lak Lon was certain a man could climb to freedom.

For five years, day in and day out, the old Burmese had studied that crevice, had made mental measurements, had firmly decided that escape by that avenue was more than a possibility.

Old age on his part, weakness and confusion and uncertainty on the part of the girl, made it a long and heartbreaking performance. It was dusk when they began that tremendous undertaking. Rocks gave way and started small avalanches below them. Niches on which Lak Lon had counted proved to be nothing but discolorations. If there had been anyone to hinder them, if there had been the usual sentries, they could never have undertaken even the first fourth of that perilous climb. But there were no sentries. There were, however, other prisoners who now saw what Lak Lon had so painstakingly studied out over these past five years.

Long before dark, at least a hundred of those leprous wretches were following that painfully blazed trail. When dark came, it was necessary to wait.

While they rested, Susan, after she had caught her breath, told the old Burmese that she had lost her memory, and she asked him questions.

"Who am I?"

"If you do not know," he answered, "how can I know?"

"But what was I doing in this place?"

"I have no answers to such questions. I lived with those on the wrong side of the wall. You lived on the other side. You lived with kings and queens, yet you are not one of them. You speak only English. I think you came from a land across the sea, a place where white barbarians live in houses a mile tall and ride about in vehicles made of the purest gold. Only Buddha knows these answers."

"What was I doing on that tower?"

"You were about to throw yourself into space."

"Why?" Susan gasped.

"I know nothing of the way of the Barbarossas."

Perched there in the darkness, high on the side of the cliff, with a chill wind in her face, with a soft continuous roaring sound coming from far below, Susan was suddenly terrified. She had a sense of awful loneliness. She was a soul lost between worlds. She pressed her palms to her throbbing temples and tried to think. But she could not remember who she had been or how she had come to this place, or from where.

When Lak Lon told her that the Kingdom of the Lost was in northeastern Indo-China, it meant nothing to her.

He told her the story of the Kingdom of the Lost, of the cruel and selfish Barbarossas, but he was evasive when she asked him where he was taking her. "To a safe refuge," was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all he could say. And at his evasiveness, her feeling of helplessness grew. He boasted of his cleverness in planning and plotting this escape. And he told her how fortunate she was that he had selected her to save. "You would have been a little white rabbit in a den of wolves."

A mountain peak beyond the far side of the mountain began to glow palely. A tip of the moon appeared. "We climb again," the old man said.

When the moon set, another long wait was necessary. Many hours later, dawn came and they commenced again, and the human chain below them lengthened and became a long, thin, winding snake.

Near the top, the crevice narrowed, and at the very top it was precipitous and hardly wide enough to admit the passage of a human body. It was necessary to squirm and writhe and claw one's way through this part.

LAK LON was the first to squirm, claw and wriggle through. Then he reached down, snatched at the girl's hands and dragged her up to safety. But Lak Lon wasn't finished. He hated that valley and its denizens with the peculiar cold and malignant hate of which only an Oriental is capable. He had blazed the trail, but he was determined that that mob of leprous idiots would not profit by his patience and cleverness.

There were any number of boulders lying about on the great green plateau on which the two refugees found themselves. Lak Lon undertook to roll the largest of them over the crack up through which he and the girl had squirmed, but he was not quite fast enough. Three men—a Mongolian prisoner of several years, and two of the death-like valley men — came squirming up and went their ways before Lak Lon could roll the boulder into place. It did not cover enough of the crack to suit him, so he rolled others.

Some of the stones were too small, and fell through, and they accomplished, in another way, what he had set out to do. They plunged through the opening, and they started a slide. And as they bounded down through the crevice, they started other slides. The long line of men, following Lak Lon's and Susan O'Gilvie's trail, was checked. Many of them were brushed off into space and sudden death by the accumulating slides, and when these rocks and the slides they precipitated had finished their work, the path had been wiped out of existence.

SUSAN

Susan watched some of this, and was terrified by it. As if she had just been born into this world of cruelty and horror, she remained in a state of helpless loneliness. She was afraid of this crochety old man with his curt answers to her questions, his elusiveness as to her fate. She knew that he had some scheme for her, that his interest in her was not unselfish. Yet there

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was no one else to whom she could appeal. If she could only remember who she was!

Lak Lon and Susan started off in a southwesterly direction. They saw no more of the tall Mongolian and the two valley men. It was, perhaps, this Mongolian who, upon reaching Hong Kong, saw and recognized Peter Moore and stealthily placed at his elbow in Ko Chang's jade shop the mystic message which had so upset the young man, for Peter Moore had hosts of unknown friends among the natives.

Of that trek across the great green plateau and later, across the almost impenetrable jungles which followed it, Susan O'Gilvie would never recall more than random details. She remembered it chiefly as a passage through the most desolate and friendless and tortured country she had ever seen.

THERE were deep canyons to cross, and areas strewn with giant boulders—a country so tortured, so dangerous that it was, to Lak Lon, easy to understand why, in all these centuries, no one from the outside world had ever discovered that great crack in the earth's crust known as the Valley of the Lost.

But he said nothing of any of this to Susan. His was a race that held women in little respect. Yet Susan had no real cause for complaint. He treated her considerately. He saw to it that she had enough to eat and drink. And on two occasions, he went out of his way to save her life—once when they were climbing along a precipice, and she slipped and fell to a ledge below, and once when they were crossing a swift, little mountain stream, and she slipped from a mossy rock and fell into the icy water.

Yet her distrust of him did not diminish. As time passed, her brain grew clearer, yet her old memory, it seemed, was gone forever.

On one score there can be no question: if Lak Lon had not been a jungle man, and had he not been intimately familiar with jungle ways, jungle animals, and jungle methods of securing safe, edible food, they would never have emerged on the other side of those trackless tropical thickets.

With nothing but a small knife, he hollowed out a log and fashioned it into a crude canoe, and with no other implements he fashioned a paddle. And with the same tool, he hacked their way through a lacework of lianas which would have otherwise been impenetrable. In fact, without Lak Lon's jungle knowledge, and without Lak Lon's knife, that journey could never have been attempted.

Armed only with the useful knife and his jungle sense, the wrinkled old Burmese took the richest girl in America through that first jungle, then through other jungles in the swamp lands of northern Siam, and over mountains. He was careful about villages. Never once did he permit Susan to enter a village. He himself went in alone, leaving her hidden safely. He would beg food and clothing and ointments to soothe their insect bites. He was doubtless pursuing a course, almost as straight as that of a homing pigeon, with nothing but the sun, the stars and his unerring instinct to guide him, toward his province and his sultan.

Weakened by exertion, frightened by the animals and reptiles she saw daily in the slimy swamps and the sightless jungles, Susan saw all this in nightmarish distortion. Nameless — a truly lost soul — she was utterly for-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lorn. The meaning of existence, if there was a meaning, was lost. Without a past, her present had no meaning, her future was a terrifying question mark. She was at the mercy of whatever fate this silent, crabbed old man might have in store for her. And in their infrequent meetings with natives when she might have appealed for help, she, unfortunately, could not speak the language.

As far as Lak Lon was concerned, her helplessness was fortunate, and it was the kind of helplessness that would appeal greatly to the Sultan of Tashwar.

In spite of her thinness, because of their terrific exertions, and in spite of insect bites, Lak Lon knew that this girl with violet eyes was the most beautiful woman on whom his sultan would ever have gazed. If his courage and his energies ever flagged, this certainty was what drove Lak Lon on.

Perhaps it made the old man a little reckless, but perhaps his fate was written in the stars—as he truly believed—long before he was born.

They had reached higher altitudes, with the jungle well behind them, when Lak Lon's tragedy occurred. They were in Moosar country, crossing a corner of Tibet, where the nights are bitter cold and the men of the great Moon tribe have sharper intelligence than their kinsmen of the swamps far below.

CHAPTER III.

TRAPPED.

TOWARD dusk, unwarned, the two pilgrims were surrounded by tall, pale-yellow men who wore goatskins and leopard hides, and who materialized about them as though produced magically by the very underbrush.

They were on the outskirts of the great trading town of Sandrakar, and Lak Lon had planned to steal in and beg a little food, leaving the girl hidden, as usual, a safe distance from the town.

It was the end of the pilgrimage, as it was the end of that wily old schemer from Tashwar.

The prisoners were hustled into the city—a city of many streets, of houses of baked and whitewashed clay—and into the presence of a fat yellow man who sat on a throne of teakwood with a great peacock fan in his hand.

This was Ram Chan, the ruler of Sandrakar, half-priest, half-king, a middle-aged, graying man with a thin, high, shrill effeminate voice.

The trial—if it could be called a trial—was the soul of briefness. The captors explained, in a strange, nasal tongue, and the captives, not knowing the tongue and without benefit of interpreters, perforce said nothing at all.

Before Susan O'Gilvie's shocked eyes, the wrinkled, bearded old man who had escorted her with such patient care over so many trackless miles was stuck in the throat with an ugly little knife, as a pig is stuck, and died at her feet, gurgling his fealty to the Sultan of Tashwar.

The girl was saved for a more ceremonious fate. She was taken from this smoke-darkened throne room and through the streets of Sandrakar, now dusky violet with approaching night, and to a hill—a sharp and sudden little hill, in the very center of the city. It was indeed the very heart of Sandrakar, for the streets radiated out from the base of the hill like wagon spokes from a hub.

A small dark edifice crowned the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hill and toward this the procession of which the American girl was a member slowly made its way. The building at the top Susan would have identified, if her memory of all past events had not been curtained. In full possession of her faculties, she would have recognized it as a temple of some sort—a temple the architect of which had been influenced by pagodas.

A door in dark masonry opened as the procession reached the hilltop. A bald-headed old man in black robes stood in the doorway, while shouts went back and forth. Then the door closed, and an adjoining door opened—a door in a wall. And Susan O'Gilvie was thrust through this into a high-walled enclosure. The door closed with a clang and she looked apprehensively about her.

Through a panel of vertical iron bars as thick as a man's wrist, she saw the procession taking its departure. She saw the last of them go down the hill, but she did not see a native boy of about fifteen, with large excited eyes in his pale yellow face, who crept back and peered through the bars.

For at that moment the American girl discovered that she was not alone in the walled and barred enclosure. And had seen the movement of something—some animal, some creature—in the shadow cast by the pagoda.

She stood rigidly, watching, scarcely breathing. From out the darkness emerged a huge creature with a slowly lashing, scaly tail. The dim light gleamed on the green hide of its great back. At the end of a long neck a reptilian head moved slowly with a strange, hypnotic motion, and three pale green eyes glowed evilly at the girl. Great jaws slowly opened and closed, as if savoring the approaching feast.

Things of its sort she had seen enough of in the jungles to realize, without calling upon that poor dark memory of hers, that it menaced her life. Yet it was neither alligator nor crocodile. A huge, malignant creature of another world, it advanced upon her, its claws clicking on the flagging, its horrible head moving from side to side.

DAZED and helpless, the girl stood and watched the green monster approach. It came slowly, with a fascinating deliberation, its great long jaw hanging slightly open, its gleaming green eyes fixed on her.

The native boy at the bars, forbidden under penalty of death to watch this sacred beast devour its kill, watched all this with a leaping heart and shaking limbs. He had defied the edict which measured out death to anyone, young or old, who lingered to watch this sacred performance. His curiosity had overcome his fear even of death. Never, in all his life, had the boy seen a being so radiantly beautiful as this girl who had been doomed to be eaten by the green dragon. He had lingered because of a sudden and dazzling infatuation for this beautiful girl. It was more than childish curiosity that held him at the thick bars.

Panting softly through his teeth, staring at this lovely being from the outer world, the boy watched the girl and the dragon. He saw the green monster approach her and stop.

The boy did not see a door in the temple wall open and a skinny hand beckon to the paralyzed girl. All the boy had eyes for was the fragile loveliness of this girl waiting for the green beast to attack, to destroy, to rend the flesh from her bones.

The dragon came close and stopped,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its tail slowly lashing from side to side. The boy saw the girl reach up with a steady hand and begin stroking the beast slowly, gently, above its three eyes.

Screaming, the boy ran from the bars, and still screaming, ran down the hill and into the city.

PETER MOORE had made his way without difficulty through the jungles of north Indo-China and so into the foothills of the Himalayas and a higher atmosphere. In the friendly and peaceful village of Khava, actually a trading post, he found Charlie Ling, the Eurasian, occupying the caravansary with Judd Burton's fifteen elephants, and forty mahouts, gun bearers and assorted servants.

Khava was on the other—the safe—side of the Tibetan border. Peter entered it late in the afternoon, exhausted by almost a month of travel on rented elephants, which he dismissed when he found Charlie Ling's caravansary.

Lean and pale and delicate in appearance, Charlie Ling welcomed him with a certain cool reserve. But when Peter mentioned his name, the Eurasian's liquid dark eyes brightened with interest. He said he had heard of Peter's exploits.

"You are really a legend," he said, in his intelligent voice. "I have envied you from afar. This is a great honor, I assure you."

And when Peter had presented to him the credentials from Judd Burton, the young Eurasian's remaining reserve melted.

"I am delighted," he said. "I prefer nothing better than to turn over this caravan to you, lock, stock and barrel. You are from now on the boss, and I gladly take your orders. Securing that so-called dragon is going to be at least a two-man job. Myself—I look upon it as a pretty hopeless undertaking."

He took Peter about the encampment, showing him the equipment and the elephants.

Until late that night, the two young men sat over a table in the tent assigned to Peter Moore, poring over maps and other data which Charlie Ling had painstakingly accumulated. Boiling all this information down, Peter was in possession of a few brief and not at all promising facts:

Sandrakar was approximately forty miles from Khava.

The road was uphill all the way.

The population of Sandrakar was about 90,000, and its people were notoriously cruel, clever, proud and barbaric.

SANDRAKAR was ruled by a king named Ram Chan, who hated all whites, in fact all outlanders, and would put them to death upon capture, either by knife or by feeding them to the sacred dragon.

The dragon temple was presided over by a priest, who lived in the temple alone. Actually, this priest was a prisoner, and under the thumb of the powerful and ruthless Ram Chan. There was a story, or legend, that the priest had brought the dragon to Sandrakar twenty years ago, had set up a strange, dragon-worshipping religion, his intention being to dominate the people and wrest Ram Chan's power away from him. But in this he had failed. Ram Chan had somehow outwitted him.

Charlie Ling said he had heard more recent rumors of a puzzling nature that the priest was dead and that a priestess now presided over the dragon

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

temple. But he had been unable to verify this rumor.

The Eurasian had not seen the dragon, and did not know whether it was a freak of the saurian family, or a true member of the fabled breed. He emphasized what Judd Burton had told Peter: the dragon was no "croc" and no "'gator." It was actually a living creature, not a clever mechanism. The populace worshipped it. It lived in a high-walled and barred enclosure beside the temple erected in its honor on the top of the central hill in Sandrakar.

Peter spent another day in the caravansary in Khava, finding out what he could about Sandrakar, its people, its customs, its king, and its dragon temple. But he realized that little help was to be gained from second-hand information. He must make his inquiries for himself.

He announced on the following morning to Charlie Ling that he would leave for Sandrakar as soon as he could disguise himself properly.

The Eurasian asked him if he had a plan for carrying off the dragon single-handed.

"I'll probably make my plans as I go along," Peter answered. "I want to look the ground over. Some kind of stratagem will be necessary. I want to see Sandrakar and that dragon with my own eyes before I decide what steps to take."

Charlie Ling hesitated and said, "Alone?"

"Unless you want to go with me."

"Of course I want to go with you, master! It is no task for a man to undertake single-handed."

Disguising themselves in the costumes of the country, the two young men set out for Sandrakar afoot. They slept overnight beside the road, and the next evening arrived at Sandrakar. Throngs of people filled the ill-lighted streets—goat-herders, hunters, priests, beggars, elephant men and camel drivers.

The language they spoke was familiar to Peter. He cound understand it, but he could not speak it.

The two young men made their way through the crowds toward the small but prominent hill in the center of the city. As they progressed, the American studied the city as a general would have studied a battlefield. No detail escaped his vigilance.

But there were other sharp eyes in Sandrakar that night, and it was to the mountain-sharpness of a street urchin's eyes that the presence of the white man, in his careful disguise, was discovered.

It was no fault of Peter Moore's that his eyes were as blue as sapphires, and that when he was excited, or under the pressure of danger, they took on a brilliant sparkle, not at all like the subdued glow of oriental eyes, no matter how strenuous the excitement.

Moosar eyes are little and brown and generally close-set. Wide-set sapphire eyes in Sandrakar are a curiosity—a sensation!

In the stream of light from a bazaar, the street urchin saw the unusual eyes. He uttered a shriek of "*Jen bibo!*"—The eyes!

Others glanced, out of simple curiosity, at the tell-tale sapphire eyes of the outlander, and others took up that disconcerting cry, "The eyes!"

PETER and Charlie Ling with one impulse broke through the suddenly forming circle and started for the nearest open space—the little hill on which stood the temple of the green dragon. They had reached this dubious

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

haven, with shrieks and yells growing closer and louder all about them, when a detachment of Ram Chan's guards, armed with Mannlicher rifles, saw the two runners and shouted at them to halt.

Half an hour later, the adventurers were escorted into the presence of fat, gross Ram Chan, who squatted on a teakwood throne gently waving a great peacock fan to and fro under his triple chins.

And at the foot of this bizarre throne, Peter was to receive the greatest and most mortifying surprise so far.

The garments were stripped from the impostors to their waists. The fat and shrewd Ram Chan stared from one half-naked man to the other, and asked questions in his high, thin, effeminate voice.

He listened to the stories of the guards and witnesses, and promptly sentenced the prisoners to death at the jaws of the dragon.

Then Charlie Ling began babbling. Words, in the native tongue, spilled from his terrified lips. He was begging for mercy. Not only begging, but bargaining.

He was bargaining that his life be spared, and that the American be fed to the dragon.

Peter Moore had faced the awful grin of death before, and in company with other men, but it was his first experience in such a situation, when a companion in battle and danger showed the white feather. It was in complete violation of Peter Moore's code. In a similar position, he would, if possible, have risked his own life to any extent, if by so doing he could have helped Charlie Ling. And at first, he could not believe his hearing—that Charlie Ling was using all his oratory to persuade Ram Chan to sacrifice the American and let him go free.

Peter listened in bewilderment and growing anger. This was the man—this Eurasian—of whom Judd Burton had stated:

"He is courageous, dependable and absolutely loyal. You can trust him without stint or limit."

And the truth suddenly dawned on our American adventurer: Charlie Ling was—must be—an impostor. Just what this impostor's scheme had been, Peter would probably never know.

The bargaining was becoming lively. Ram Chan was beginning to weaken. His only stipulation was that one of the captives must remain his prisoner. Yet Charlie Ling had made no attempt at persuading Ram Chan to let the two of them go free.

"Three elephants, your majesty!" the Eurasian shouted.

And it was settled on that basis. The American was to lose his life, the Eurasian's was to be spared on condition that he deliver to Ram Chan three able-bodied elephants.

Peter had stood speechless and motionless throughout that brisk dickering. Now his fury let go. He leaped at "Charlie Ling," intending to destroy him with his bare hands. But he did not reach the treacherous Eurasian. As he leaped, with fists upraised, a rifle butt in the hands of a guard came cracking against the side of his skull.

The American staggered back, vainly fighting off the blackness that swarmed in upon him. He staggered against a wall, with blood streaming from the broken skin down the side of his chin. He was taking great, deep breaths and heaving them out, trying to beat off that awful influx of darkness, fiercely willing himself to stay

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on his feet, to reach the perfidious Eurasian, to fight, not to fall.

RAM CHAN, with his triple chins resting on a fat fist, watched him with twinkling little brown eyes. When the white man collapsed to hands and knees, shaking his head, trying to clear his senses, the plump oriental monarch bent forward, watching his grotesque efforts as, hundreds of years ago, a Roman emperor might have watched the futile struggles of a man in a lion pit.

Still fighting off unconsciousness, still on rigid hands and knees, Peter succumbed to the blackness. And Ram Chan made a little gesture with his unoccupied hand.

The victim of the Eurasian's treachery and cowardice recovered partly from that blow on the head as he was being dragged through the streets toward the temple on the little hill. A man had him by either leg. He was being dragged unceremoniously along a rough road of dried mud. People were yelling. Stones were thrown at him.

He was numbly aware of both insults and injuries. The world had become a sick and aching confusion to Peter Moore. Lights flickered and died. A great thumping was taking place inside his battered head. Dimly, he recalled a glimpse of that rifle butt as it sliced through the air. He had never felt so ill. And some remote rational corner of his brain assured him that his skull must be cracked.

He did not realize he was being dragged up the hill. Drunkenly, he saw, as he lay on the hilltop, a grim dark structure. Then a door opened, and a partition was let into the blackness—an oblong area with an arched top from which yellow light poured.

A figure in black robes was holding a dancing yellow light high over its head. Voices spoke. There were shrill shouts, then the door closed. And Peter now heard a clanking. Again he was picked up, and this time, when he was unceremoniously thrown to the ground, all babbling ceased.

He lay on the ground where he had

CHARLIE LING

been thrown, unable to lift his head or to move hand or leg. He was partly on his side, with one leg doubled under him.

There was another clanging, and then silence fell. As if he were lapsing again into unconsciousness, all sounds perceptibly withdrew. Far away, a faint roaring might have been that of the city—or the protest of cells in his throbbing brain.

His eyes presently made out a dense twilight—a soft diffusion of light far away which etched the outlines of a nearby building. And he heard a curious clicking sound on the flagging of the enclosure into which he had been tossed. Pale green eyes glowed at him. The clicking sound came closer. The great body of some huge monster loomed near him.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His burning eyes delivered to his brain the ironical information that he was, after all this effort, at last in the sacred precincts of the green dragon of Sandrakar. Over the dragon-wall!

He was unable to move any muscle below his neck. His eyes strained in the direction of the clicking sounds. The creature took form.

A great saurian monster, it loomed above him in the darkness, its head moving slowly from side to side. Three green eyes gleamed at him. The monster's jaws gaped hungrily, closed with a blood-chilling snap.

Little rivulets of ice seemed to be trickling down Peter's spine. He fought against terrible fear, against his physical weakness, against a supernatural dread. A dragon—a Chinese dragon of myth become terrifying actuality—was advancing upon him, advancing to tear him to bits and feast upon his carcass! He must escape—back—back over the dragon wall!

He tried to move, and could not. The evil head of the dragon was slowly coming closer. He stared into its glowing green eyes with an awful fascination. In a moment—in just a moment—those powerful jaws would open wider, wider—and close down relentlessly on his body.

He made a final desperate effort to get up. A crackling, splitting sensation occurred in his head. Someone was grasping his shoulders, dragging him toward a rectangle of golden light in the wall. He felt the flagging bumping along under his heels; he heard desperate panting sounds behind him.

The dragon of Sandrakar seemed to recede, as if it were backing away. Its lower jaw was pendulous. It seemed to be laughing at him. Then a heavy door slammed

He must have lost consciousness again, for he did not recall having been dragged or carried through the dark corridor, with its flickering oil tapers in niches, into which he had been taken from the enclosure.

CHAPTER IV.

PLAN FOR ESCAPE.

HIS next awareness was of a large and lofty room. He opened his eyes upon a new scene. More oil tapers flamed and guttered in niches in darkened stone walls, losing their rays in the blackness of a lofty arched ceiling and splintering into paler rays against sheets of glass behind which, in recesses in the walls, hung strange, bright satin and silk garments.

He was lying on his back, and a face was bending over him, and dark pools of eyes were searching into his.

He knew now that all of this was the stuff of dreams, or the hazy outlines of the half-world to which the recent dead go. For the slimly beautiful face hovering over him, with its great deep eyes, not blue but an amazing dark violet, with its breathlessly parted lips, was that of Susan!

He tried to say it, but his throat was too choked. But his heart shouted it—his whole being shouted it. And if this was death, he cared for no more life. And he knew, even as his senses cleared a little, that it could be nothing but death, for had he not seen Susan fall from that high tower in the Kingdom of the Lost? And even if she could have been miraculously spared from death, there was utterly no possibility that she could have escaped from that dreadful place with its high, unscalable, soaring walls.

Yes, she was dead, and one of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

miraculous and merciful things about death was that you bore no scars from your previous existence. Susan must have been horribly mutilated in that fall from the tower upon the barbed iron spikes below, but she was now intact, unmarred—as beautiful as he remembered her. Yet why had he carried into death the scars of his last living hour?

It occurred to him that it was a little unfair for a man who had slipped from life into death to have such aches and pains and such weakness as afflicted him. He should have cast off, as a useless garment, all the ills and hurts to which mortal flesh is heir; he should have been gloriously reborn, in this new life after death, in possession of all his earthly strength and clear-mindedness. Hadn't Susan?

But this would, presumably, pass away. And he was content for the moment merely to know that he had found her again. He had never known happiness quite like it—to be reunited, after all these heartbroken, bitter months, with his gay, beautiful, thrilling Susan!

All this time, while he gazed up, trying to smile, into that lovely hovering face, Susan was regarding him with an air at once dazed and puzzled.

And it struck him forcibly, with a sinking heart, that she did not recognize him.

To her, he was a stranger! She did not know him! He, her lover—the man she had professed to love more than any living human being—the man she had been planning to marry—this man was, to her, a stranger!

Peter Moore's opinion of the life after death underwent a quick revision. If lovers who met again after death were to be strangers to each other, then death was cruel indeed.

But there was one compensation. The awful throbbing in his head was subsiding a little, and he found suddenly that he had a voice—a faint and feeble voice to be sure, yet it could manufacture speech.

"Susan!" he whispered.

And the girl stared at him uncomprehendingly.

He tried again. "Susan! Don't you remember me?"

She shook her head a little. Lights danced in her beautiful eyes.

"No. Who are you?"

It pained him to have to give the answer to that. "Think hard. I am Peter."

And he saw, in her vague and puzzled eyes, that his name meant nothing to her.

"Think!" he gasped. "Try to think, darling! We were alive—in that valley. You jumped from the tower. I thought you were dead and I escaped. Thank God, we're dead."

Again she shook her head. "I don't remember. But something is wrong. We aren't dead. We are alive."

He stared up at her. "I died outside this temple."

"No, no. You didn't die. I dragged you inside. Whoever you are—you didn't die. And I didn't die."

A REALIZATION that there might be a grain of truth in this caused Peter to try to sit up. He succeeded partly. Then his head took up its banging and he let himself fall back.

"You leaped from that tower," he said harshly.

"But I didn't leap. An old Burmese who took me out of that valley told me. I started to fall. A soldier grabbed a fold of my gown and saved me. Then this old Burmese and I climbed out of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that valley and we came here. He was killed."

It sounded plausible. It actually sounded convincing.

Peter, staring up at her, wondered. And then Susan said, "I do not know who I am. For a time I was utterly dazed. But my head has grown clearer and clearer. I can remember everything that happened since the old Burmese helped me escape from the valley, but I can remember nothing before that. I can remember people—men and women—running about and shouting. And I can remember our climb out of that valley. But I do not remember anything that happened before."

"Not even your name?"

"Not even my name."

He told her it was Susan O'Gilvie. And she pronounced the syllables as if she were quite a stranger to them, then said, "And yours is Peter?"

"Yes, Susan."

She did not know him. She sat on a stool beside the couch on which she had placed him, and looked at him with eyes that were dark and bottomlessly deep, and that dazed, puzzled look remained. It was as if, far in the back of her mind, his name echoed hollowly, without meaning, and his image meant nothing likewise. She stared and stared at him. And he wondered if Susan would ever regain what she had lost.

He accepted without further question the fact that he was alive. Having found Susan, after these bleak and empty months, he was too glad to care whether he was alive or dead. And he was almost too sick to care.

The room went darker and darker, slipping off presently into a whirling black nothingness in which red sparks floated and spun. Then he felt cold water on his face. She was bathing his temples.

Sitting on the stool, she was watching him, never taking those beautiful violet eyes, with their strange vagueness, away from him. Streaks of gray light were coming in at openings. He had slept for hours. He was, he realized, much better. His head still ached, still throbbed when he tried to move. But the awful sickness of last night was gone.

Not yet awake, he thought of his miraculous escape from the green dragon. His brain was clear enough, now, to realize what the creature actually was. To any untutored eye, the creature might readily be mistaken for a true dragon of myth. It was neither crocodile nor alligator. But it was, the injured man was now certain, a species of lizard—a freak, no doubt, or what Judd Burton had called a sport. Perhaps it was a gigantic specimen of a common enough breed of the lizard family. Peter had heard of similar lizards in South America, and in the Galapagos Islands, off South America. He had never before seen anything like it in the Orient.

The third eye of the creature still puzzled him, but he was beginning to suspect what that third eye might be.

COMING awake, he grinned. And the girl smiled at him. But it was a child's smile, tender and wondering and awed. And the young man wondered if her experience had changed Susan so—or whether this was a change due to her loss of memory. He had never seen Susan so subdued, so meek, so gentle. She had been so gay, so exuberant, so mischievous.

She said quietly, "I have spent the whole night, sitting here, looking at you, trying to remember." She gave a funny little shrug. "I can't. I'm

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

afraid I'll just have to begin life all over again."

The light shifting into the temple was a brighter gray now, tinged with yellow and pink.

"Susan, tell me how you happen to be here?"

She told him, simply, of Lak Lon's death, and of her amazing adventure with the dragon.

"It came toward me, and I don't know why I wasn't afraid of it. I wasn't. I felt sorry for it. The poor thing looked so unhappy, so lonely. It was supposed to eat me alive. But it didn't. It let me scratch its head. And one of the native boys, who defied the law and stayed to watch, saw this—and he ran screaming down into the village to say— What could he have said?"

"That a goddess had come to town," Peter guessed.

"They killed the old man, the priest, who was here before me. I've had plenty of time to think and wonder. I don't think that dragon was ever vicious. I think he's always been as gentle as a lamb, although perhaps he's just old. I think that old priest built up the tradition—the law—that no one was to stay behind and watch the dragon eat his victims. He must have been a tricky old rascal."

"Is that third eye of the dragon an emerald?"

"Yes. It has been set in his thick hide in his forehead."

Peter had never before seen an emerald of such size. It must have been, he recalled, fully three-quarters of an inch in diameter. It must be worth a rajah's ransom, and it occurred to him that this emerald doubtless explained the spurious "Charlie Ling."

Why not? There were no lengths to which one of these rascally half-breeds would not go. Doubtless the impostor—if Peter's theory was the correct answer—had killed or somehow done away with the real Charlie Ling, and had merely awaited Peter's coming to Khava. How he had obtained advance news of Peter's coming was neither mysterious nor miraculous. There were grapevines on which rumors flowered from one end of Asia to the other.

It was probable that the false Charlie Ling had wanted Peter's help in stealing the dragon, or in obtaining access to it. But when they had been captured and taken before Ram Chan, he had preferred to lose Peter rather than his own life.

Peter said, "Am I the first victim since you've been priestess?"

"Yes."

"Yes, Peter," he said.

"Yes—Peter," she complied, and blushed.

"What did he do with the others?"

"I think he killed them and threw them into the old well in the compound in back. There are bones in the bottom of it, and there is clothing of all sorts and sizes piled in another room."

"How long have you been here?"

"I don't know. Months, I think."

"Can you come and go at your will?"

"No. I am actually nothing but a prisoner. There is a guard outside, day and night."

"How much of a guard?"

"One man. But he won't let me out. And he or someone brings me food every morning—rice and fruit and things."

"What does this lizard eat?"

She smiled again. "He is a vegetarian. I'll show you the garden. Can you walk?"

Peter found he could sit up. Ex-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perimentally, he stood up. His head throbbed, and he felt dizzy. But he could stand up. He could walk.

HE went out into the garden with Susan—a tangle of undergrowth surrounded by a wall at least fifteen feet high. He looked into the deep well she had mentioned—saw the human bones at the bottom.

But he was much less interested in his surroundings, and in the plight in which he and Susan were placed, than in Susan herself—this strange, shy, changed Susan.

Her eyes were shy. She would glance at him, then hastily glance away—and blush. It was altogether as startling as if he had found a girl—a perfectly strange girl—in Susan's skin. In appearance, she hadn't changed. Possibly she was lovelier, but she looked no older for her shocking experience.

He could not reconcile himself to this change which seemed to affect her whole personality. He could not understand how she could so completely lose her memory of all past events beyond her leap from that tower, and at the same time retain, as she had, her speech, her vocabulary.

Where she had once been willful and headstrong, she was now submissive and meek. Where she had once been arrogant—an arrogance due, no doubt, to her great wealth—she was now humble. And in place of her champagne-like gaiety, her craving for adventurous thrills, she was now gentle and sweet.

He told her something about herself—how they had met, almost three years before, on a transpacific liner bound from San Francisco to the Far East. How they had shared adventures. And how they had come to be prisoners in the Kingdom of the Lost.

She listened to him, large-eyed, with frequent gasps and little exclamations. And he presently realized that he might as well have been telling a child a fairy tale. She was fascinated, but it was not part of her.

Since he had met Susan, on that exciting transpacific crossing, she had told him a great deal about her childhood and girlhood—the strange existence of the richest orphan in America.

"When you say that I am the richest girl in America, or in the world, it means nothing to me except this: Why, if I am so rich, did I expose myself to such dangers when I might have enjoyed a full life quietly and safely?"

"I asked you that question once. Your answer was that you'd rather have five cents' worth of adventure and excitement than a million dollars' worth of safety and security."

Susan shook her head with a wondering look. "I can't understand it. I hate excitement and adventure and danger. I'd like nothing better than to live in some quiet, sunny place where there was a huge flower garden."

In the face of her new shyness, her demureness, he could not bring himself to tell her that they had been engaged to be married. And as the morning wore on and he talked and she demurely listened, he became aware of the strangest development so far. This strange, beautiful girl was falling in love with him. He dismissed her shyness at first as strangeness, but as time passed and he saw in her the symptoms which had heralded her love for him in the first place, he was stunned.

YET there was a difference. The old Susan had not let him stay in the dark about it for very long. She had told him excitedly, joyously that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she had finally found the one man she could really adore—and he was it! And she had been astonished but not hurt at his resistance. She loved resistance! She loved conflict! She would win him if it took the rest of her life and the last dollar of her huge fortune. And at last she had battered down his objections to marrying the richest girl in America, if not in the whole world.

This new Susan, on the other hand, might have been a fresh convent graduate. Her demureness, her shyness, her blushes were those of innocent girlhood. It was as if Susan were determined to fall in love with him all over again in this embarrassing way.

Peter might have construed it to mean that their love was unquestionably of a lasting sort; he might have been delighted at her naïve approach to their old relationship. But he could not rid himself of strange notions.

He tried to batter his way through that closed door into her memory. He tried going about it gently, persuasively. He tried more violent approaches. He went so far as to seize her by the shoulders and shake her and shout: "Susan! Snap out of it! Look at me! For God's sake, look at me!"

And when she looked at him, with eyes dazed by the shaking, but with that meek, shy smile, he shook her again, then cried impatiently: "Go over there and bang your head against that wall!" And she would have done it, if he hadn't laughed and told her not to be a ninny.

Susan came back and looked up at him adoringly. He wanted to kiss her. He wanted to snatch her in his arms and kiss her with the ardor he had once used. But he would not take advantage of this appallingly young, starry-eyed girl.

Briskly, he said, "Susan, we have got to get out of here."

"Yes, Peter," she said, and in such a voice that he looked at her with hearty hope, but it was not the old Susan.

"How can we escape?"

"I don't know."

"Haven't you thought about it?"

"What would be the use?"

"We're going to get you out of here," he said fiercely. "We're going to get you back to civilization. We're going to look for the girl you used to be."

"Yes, Peter."

She showed him more of the temple. There were winding stairs into a little room at the top of the tower, and there were slits in the tower, like old gun ports, from which he could look out over the roofs of Sandrakar.

Peter settled down to a long study of the situation. He walked from slot to slot, looking down the narrow, congested streets, looking along the roofs. There were a dozen roads spoking out from the little hill on which the dragon temple stood, but none of them was an avenue of escape.

He looked out wistfully over the surrounding country. Off to the west were the foothills of great mountains. Far, far away he could see them, floating like clouds in the thin blue air of the country. The greatest mountains in the world, these—all but impenetrable. Through here was one of the roads to that other forbidden city—Lhasa.

TO the south, the hills tumbled away into a green and promising haze. Down that was Burma. A little to the right, if one took a straight course, was India. But in neither of these directions was Peter interested.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Their flight, if they could somehow escape from this city of barbarians, would be toward the northeast, along the route he had followed—straight across the jungles of northern Siam, and then through Cambodia, through Angkor and to the civilized seaport of Saigon, the capital of French Indo-China.

The route was the one by which he had entered Khava. It wasn't safe. None of these routes were safe, but he was more familiar with the one from Khava to Saigon.

All afternoon he studied, tried this plan and that against the keen edge of his experience, only to discard them all. And late that afternoon, he believed he had found the solution.

The streets which led due north from the temple were the shortest of them all. The houses were in a solid row, and this row of houses ended against the flank of a brown hill. He saw a ladder leaning against the nearest wall.

The rest was easy. He would surprise and overpower the guard on duty at the temple doors. He and Susan would run to the ladder, climb to the roof and make their way as speedily as possible across the rooftops to the flank of that hill.

Once away from Sandrakar, in the open country, they would take their luck as they found it.

He outlined this proposition to Susan. She listened with glowing eyes.

Peter spent the remainder of the afternoon considering disguises. Rummaging about in one of the rooms, he made an interesting discovery. It was a dark room, or he wouldn't have made the discovery.

It was a glass jar with a screw top, and the jar bore a Japanese label. Peter, familiar with written and spoken Japanese, read the label: *Paint That Glows in the Night and Other Places of Extreme Darkness.* And in the murk of the room, the jar glowed as if it were whitely afire.

Peter unscrewed the cap and sniffed at the contents—a greasy gray paste which glowed and shimmered and smelled evilly of phosphorus. Whatever it may have been intended for by its manufacturers, he realized that its purpose here was, twice every year, to make the green lizard appear to be white-hot.

Smeared with this stuff from snout to tail, the dragon of Sandrakar would no doubt become—after dark—an awesome spectacle.

He put the jar aside and continued his rummaging. He found clothing which had once been worn by men who had, he supposed, been sacrifices to the dragon. He suspected that none of these victims had been harmed by the great lizard, but had been murdered by Susan's predecessor. None of the clothing showed tears or holes that might have been caused by an attack by the dragon, and he found blood on none of them. He presumed that the old priest had clubbed the men to death in their sleep, removed their garments and thrown their bodies down the well in the compound.

Among these garments, he found several suits which had been worn by white men, presumably English adventurers or traders who had come to Sandrakar by way of India.

HE asked Susan what had become of the old priest. She told him.

When she was in the walled and barred enclosure with the big green lizard, a door into the enclosure from the temple—the same door through which she had dragged Peter—had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opened, and an old man had beckoned to her. She had gone inside the temple and he had closed the door. She supposed he would have killed her if that native boy had not seen her miraculously subdue the dragon with a touch of her fingers.

"I don't think it occurred to Ram Chan," she said, "that there was nothing miraculous or magical about it, but that the lizard was really harmless. He or the rest of the village took it for granted that the dragon had spared me because I had some special kind of oriental merit. And they must have thought that the old priest had lost his power, or been bewitched, or both.

"Anyway, they came and banged on the big north door until he opened it. Ram Chan ordered him to come out. When he started down the steps, two soldiers with swords stepped up and cut him down. They dragged him through the streets. And Ram Chan gave me to understand that I was the new priestess of the dragon temple. I don't understand anything of this language, but he managed to make it quite clear."

Peter, studying her with a frown, was more puzzled than ever. She talked so intelligently, so rationally—just as she had used to talk in her rare solemn moments.

She had started to pick up a blue jacket from the pile of clothing. He shouted "S u s a n!" Startled, she dropped the jacket and stared up at him. But the transformation hadn't occurred. Her eyes remained vague and puzzled.

She smiled understandingly and said, "It's no use, Peter. It's a locked door. Maybe it will never be unlocked." Then her smile vanished and she softly cried: "Am I so dreadfully changed? What was I like before?"

"There was more trouble in the tip of your little finger," he told her, "than there is in a herd of wild elephants on the rampage. You could think up mischief faster than any living human. You got yourself and me into so much trouble that the American consul-general in Hong Kong finally kicked us out of China."

Susan stared at him with wide glowing eyes of amazement. Then she shook her head.

"You liked me better that way?"

"I did—emphatically. Because you were you. There was never anyone like you, Susan. You were a little devil. You were the original thrill-hunter."

"And you loved me," she whispered. "And you can't love me as I am now."

She was so pathetic, so hurt, that he wanted to take her into his arms. Tears came into her eyes. She turned away from him suddenly.

He did not know if this was the right way to go about it. But he would try any expedient. He knew that, for a person with her strange mental kink, there was no help from surgery. But how did one go about breaking down a door that had closed not only upon memory but upon personality?

He was sorry for this Susan, and he would, in time, love her. The beauty of her face and the slim rounded perfection of her body would make it difficult for any healthy young man not to fall in love with her. Yet the thing that had gone out of her—the fire of the spirit—had been one of Susan's strongest attractions for him. He had heartily disapproved of her capacity for getting herself into dangerous scrapes, but her very adventurousness and fearlessness had made him love her as he never had and never would love another woman.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And he wondered if some sudden excitement would break down that stubborn door. As sweet, as charming as this new Susan was, he wanted the old one.

He selected drab and colorless native costumes as the disguises they would wear on their break for freedom. Susan would dress, he announced, as a beggar boy, and he would dress as a priest.

He made this decision on finding a rough brown cloak of camel's wool, with hood attached. With the hood over his face, no one would see his telltale eyes.

When their costumes were assembled and ready, Peter continued his tour. In another room, he found a jar of stain which would do to change Susan's whiteness to pale brownness. It was necessary to stain only her face, neck, hands and ankles, as the beggar boy costume covered her everywhere else.

In the room in which he had first opened his eyes, Peter found other items of great interest. Susan declared that she had never hit upon any satisfactory explanation for the bright satin and silk garments in the wall recesses. They hung in these recesses behind protective sheets of glass—robes of various sizes and of brightest colors—jade green, sea-blue, blood-red and sheer snow-white. Some of these robes were jeweled, others were severely plain and simple, but all were of the finest and richest kind of satin, doubtless hand-loomed.

And at the back of one of these recesses, Peter came upon an object that puzzled him more than anything so far. It was a kind of harness, made of white leather straps, strongly sewn, and these straps were liberally studded with emeralds. The carving was crude, the color was slightly off, but they were authentic emeralds.

CHAPTER V.

"CHARLIE LING" AGAIN.

PETER removed it from the peg on which it hung, and stretched out the harness on the stone floor. It puzzled him for a long time. If it had been made for a horse, or pony, the animal must have been of strange conformation indeed. And there were no reins, only a leash-like strap about fifteen feet in length ending in a thick elephant-hair loop. It dawned on him suddenly, "It's for that dragon!"

If he could have, in any way, delivered the green monster to Judd Burton, he would have liked to deliver this amazing harness to him also. Then it struck him somewhat forcibly that he could not break his word to Judd Burton. Peter had once declared, perhaps recklessly, that the word "impossible" had better been left uncoined. He knew that he could not rest until he had exhausted every possibility of securing this green monster for the animal collector.

First of all, however, he must deliver Susan to safety. That done, he would return with a better organized plan of getting the dragon. Somehow he must secure and deliver this big lizard to Judd Burton!

The sun was setting now. Slanting rays of purple-red light were stealing through windows and niches high in the temple walls. And Peter and Susan got busy with their preparations for escape. He dyed her face, her ears, neck, hands, wrists, ankles and feet with the stain. Then, while he got into his monk's raiment, she went into another room, disrobed and put on the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

khaki shorts and blouse left behind by some ill-fated, slender youth. These were for travel through the jungle—the most practical outfit she could wear. Over blouse and shorts she put on the long shabby, woolen robes of a beggar. She tucked up her dark curling hair, and hid it completely under a goatskin cap.

When she returned, Peter had become a bent-shouldered monk, with a cape well down over his eyes. Beside him, on the stone floor, was a long, thin club. It was the only weapon of any description he had been able to find in the temple.

He climbed again into the dome of the temple, for a final survey of their route of proposed escape. There had been people on those roofs throughout the day, but with the setting of the sun, a wind came flowing down from the high, snow-capped mountains of Tibet, and this wind poured down upon Sandrakar with the biting cold of a mountain stream, driving the last of the women and children from the roofs. It should be clear going.

As he was preparing to descend, he saw, in the pure ruby light of almost horizontal sunrays which shot over the city and against a wall of trees on the outskirts, the silhouettes of three lumpy shapes—black objects that moved slowly against the trees along the road from Khava to Sandrakar.

He identified them presently as elephants, and would have dismissed them from mind at once except for that lingering, bitter memory of "Charlie Ling's" treachery. Three elephants! The Eurasian had bargained with Ram Chan, had named three elephants as the price of life and liberty.

The ruby rays of the sun flicked off as the sun dropped behind the Himalayas. The three plodding elephants vanished into the blue haze of the valley evening. Darkness would come swiftly.

Peter descended from the dome. He said: "The roofs are clear now. Even the streets are almost empty, with everyone at the evening meal. Ready?"

She was looking up at him with meek, adoring eyes.

"Yes, Peter."

"Scared?"

Her prompt headshake was that of a small girl. "No, Peter," she said stoutly, "not with you to protect me. You've saved me from too many scrapes."

HE started to pick up the club. Now he straightened up and stared at her. It was almost as if the old Susan, in one of her demurely mocking moments, had spoken. But she was only referring to some of the adventures he had described.

Earlier in the afternoon, he had liberally oiled the hinges of the great north door, and had drenched with oil the ponderous iron bolt which held it closed against the world.

As far as was possible, he was in readiness for the attempt. Susan had told him the guard was changed twice daily, at noon and at midnight. There would be no confusion on that score.

He picked up the club and went to the door with Susan close at his heels. His heart was hammering. Once they opened that door, there was no returning. And if this venture failed, all hope was lost. They would certainly be apprehended. Their lives would certainly pay for it.

With the utmost care, Peter slid back the ponderous iron bolt in its great wrought-iron sockets. It made no sound. Cautiously, he pulled open the great door, and this maneuver, too,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was without the slightest attendant noise.

And with the door open, the club ready in his hands, Peter found himself face to face with a sentry armed with a rifle! There had been no opportunity to peer out, to make certain that the guard was facing the other way.

Peter was sure that this tall man in goatskin was the more surprised of the two. If he had not been so completely taken by surprise, he would have had that rifle up and ready to fire. It was not ready. Its butt was resting on the flagging.

For the fraction of a second, the beady little dark eyes stared at the two in the opening door. Then the rifle came up. But as it came Peter rushed, raising the club as he went. He brought it cracking down on the sentry's skull. And so far that was the only sound—a dull thump of hard wood meeting hard bone with a goatskin cap between. As the guardian of the temple gate sagged, Peter reached for the rifle, snatched it up before it could fall with the inevitable hard clatter.

He had planned on securing the guard's rifle, but he had not planned on a modern Mannlicher, with a shell in the chamber and a full magazine!

Luck played such a large part in an affair of this kind! Peter congratulated himself. Now if their luck, so auspiciously begun, would only hold!

He abandoned the club and took Susan's hand in his free hand. With swift stealth, they descended the temple steps and then the northern side of the hill. Night had come. The wind from the high mountains was sharp and fresh and scented with ice. Tibetan star-herds marched brightly in the sky.

The ladder still leaned against the whitewashed baked mud wall. And Peter hoped now that his lengthy surveys of the scene had been accurate. As far as he had been able to tell, the roofs were joined in an endless flat to the very end—to where the hills on the north began.

They swarmed up the ladder. It made creaking noises, but the song of the wind drowned these, as did the hearty voices of the occupants of the house. Cooking smells were in the air, mostly the rich pungence of broiling mutton fat.

On the rooftop, Susan clung to his arm, shivering.

"All right?" he whispered.

"Yes, Peter!"

He had two high hopes. One, that they make good this escape, with all its excellent promise. The other, that the suspense, the threat of danger would break down that door in Susan's brain, that she would lose this frightened-little-girl personality and regain her other, her real self.

They cautiously crossed that roof, and others. They met no one. It had been a simple, good plan, and they were executing it nicely.

Just ahead of them now, looming in the star-glow, lay the flank of the little hill beyond which was, Peter devoutly hoped, freedom.

And with only three more roofs to cross, the stratagem came to sudden and unexpected doom.

FROM the last house in the long row flames suddenly burst forth.

And it was as if this fire had been, with deliberate cunning, set off for the sole purpose of foiling their plans. That it was incendiary, Peter did not for a moment doubt. The flames burst alight and instantly began to roar into the sky, with a great belching of black

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

smoke. And these clouds of smoke were heavily fragrant with the fumes of kerosene!

It did not seem possible that anyone could have had such diabolical cunning as to devise this means of frustrating their escape. Yet there could be no doubt that someone had deliberately set that house afire, with every intention of creating a fierce and terrible blaze.

Certainly, all hope of escape in that direction was now ruined. People were bursting from doorways. Others were swarming on the roofs behind them. A small mob was choking the streets. And the fired house had now become a giant torch, throwing light across the hills as if they comprised the setting of a great stage.

It was possible that, in the moment's excitement, they might make a break for it—and succeed. But the risk was too great.

He said swiftly, "We'll go back to the temple, cut around back, and slip out the south way. There's another chance, but it's too risky."

"Will we dare go through the city —any way?"

"Why not? This fire is going to be good. It's going to be a humdinger. This whole end of the town will be blazing before long. Caked mud on rattan! It's going to burn like a last year's bird nest. We won't be noticed —if we hurry while the hysteria is on."

Peter hid the Mannlicher in a fold of his robe. They descended to the street by a ladder and made their way through running, surging crowds. In the uproar, they escaped detection, and when they were within a block or two of the temple hill, the crowds thinned, and the last part of the way was through a deserted street.

But there was excitement at the temple. Men were shouting, and the blue-red spurts of rifle fire flashed against the velvet night. A bullet sang close to Peter's head, and he instinctively ducked. For some time, he believed that all this excitement was due to the discovery that he and Susan had escaped. Then he saw that two groups of men were carrying on this fight. And as he watched, the smaller group backed down and scattered. A volley of shots was fired at the fugitives. And in a random ray of light, Peter saw that those who had done the firing were guards, or soldiers. And he wondered who the others were.

The company of Ram Chan's men were now racing toward the south end of the temple, firing as they ran.

A suspicion of what was behind all this furor was dawning on Peter.

He said, "We got to get into that temple a moment—until these soldiers have scattered. It's risky, I know."

Susan, clinging to him, was shaking with terror. He seized her arm to steady her, and half-carried her the rest of the way to the hill and up the hill. The guards were shouting in back. The two fugitives ran up the temple steps down which they had so recently—and with such high hopes—escaped. The temple door was still open, as they had left it, but the guard was gone. The yelling soldiers came closer.

ONCE inside, Peter closed and bolted the door. He looked hastily into the other rooms, making sure they were not occupied. The shouts of the soldiers were drawing away now. Ram Chan's men were still pursuing their quarry, and their quarry, it appeared, had decided on westward flight.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Peter peeked out the door and saw all this. It seemed to him that the fire was not blazing so fiercely. Now was the time to put his alternative plan into effect. And there could be no delay. They would push on out through any of the streets running southward. Once out of Sandrakar, they would discreetly encircle it to the Khava Road. And if that scheme proved unwise, they would keep going straight south, to Burma, or, farther west, to India. Unknown and dangerous territory all the way to the border, but there was, once again, no choice.

And as he started to pull the heavy door open, a deep and heavy groaning arrested him. It seemed to come from the dragon's enclosure. Peter hesitated a moment, then ran to the bolted door which gave upon the walled and barred enclosure.

Three men were lying there. Evidently they had climbed the dragon wall, had been shot as they leaped, or had been struck down by bullets fired between the thick iron bars.

Two of the men were dead. Peter recognized them. The third was laboriously, noisily breathing, uttering agonized groans.

Lying flat on its belly near the outer wall, the great lizard watched Peter, not moving.

Charlie Ling was the unconscious one. He had, Peter guessed, delivered the three elephants to Ram Chan, and had then had some of his own men fire the house as a decoy—to distract attention from his main plan. This plan had been to enter the great lizard's cage. He had come here, Peter was now certain, not to steal the dragon, but to rob from its forehead that priceless green emerald.

Behind him, Susan, shivering wailed: "Peter! Hurry! There isn't a moment to lose! The fire is dying out, and some of the people are coming back! What—what's this?"

"This one isn't dead, but I think he's dying. He's the man who sold me over the dragon wall for three elephants! Let's go!"

"But you can't leave him here for Ram Chan to find!"

"It's Charlie Ling or us!"

"But Ram Chan would torture him!"

"It means losing our chance to escape!"

"Peter, I'd never forgive myself—or you—if we ran away from this wounded man. We can't leave a wounded white man to these barbarians!"

"He isn't white! He's Eurasian—the kind who would cut your throat for the price of a pipe of opium!"

But he gave in. Susan was right. Even as he despised the man, Peter couldn't leave him here for the tortures which Ram Chan would certainly inflict on him.

Telling Susan to close and bolt the door, Peter picked up the unconscious man and carried him into the large room. Susan had meanwhile gone to the north door to make observations.

She returned with the depressing news that the fire was out. The mob was scattering.

"I'm sorry, Peter. We might have escaped. But I couldn't leave this wounded man to Ram Chan."

The Eurasian was breathing noisily, in short, awful gasps. Peter had torn open the heavy *lemba,* or loose woolen jacket, and found the wound, a bullet hole just below the heart. Blood was pulsing from it, and running down the chest of the spurious Charlie Ling. Considering its location, Peter did not see how a man shot just below the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heart with an expanding bullet could possibly live.

His diagnosis was verified with grim irony at that moment when the wounded man, with a final convulsive heaving of his chest, stopped breathing entirely. A last gasp rattled in his throat, and he mysteriously seemed to diminish in size. Charlie Ling had not, ironically, recovered consciousness since he had been shot.

And even as that last dying breath was wrenched from him, a hammering of rifle butts set up a small thunder at the north door.

Susan was clutching Peter's hand. She whispered: "It's my fault! It's all my fault! We're trapped! There's utterly no chance of escape!"

Then she gave a little laugh. "I don't want to live. I don't want you to be killed, but I don't want to live! You hate me as I am. And I can't ever be what I was before."

She laughed again, this time more hysterically. "Isn't it ironical and funny, Peter? Ever since you met me, on the transpacific crossing, I've been a perfect bane to you—always getting you into the most terrific trouble. I've gone and done it again—the last time! If I hadn't insisted on our trying to save this dead man, we'd have escaped! Before they break down that door and grab us, tell me—oh, Peter, tell me you might have loved me as I am—just a little!"

Peter grasped her hands and said grimly: "Susan, pull yourself together. There's still a chance. We may be killed trying, but we won't be shot like rats."

Above the uproar of shouts and the banging of rifle butts against the door, he heard the thin, high shrilling of Ram Chan's voice.

And Peter went about the hasty execution of the bold and daring plan he had considered and discarded earlier, the first step of which was to lure, or coax, or somehow compel the great green lizard to enter the temple.

CHAPTER VI.

A BOLD IDEA!

WORD had spread through Sandrakar that the blue-eyed man who had been supposedly devoured by the dragon was alive and safe within the temple walls. The sentry who had succumbed to that swift blow of the white man's club had recovered and spread this news. Other sharp-eyed citizens had, it appeared, seen the white man and the priestess run up the steps and into the temple only a moment ago.

It was said that they had started that mysterious fire. Other rumors flew and reached Ram Chan, who deserted his throne and hastened to the temple, where a great mob of citizenry and soldiers had assembled. Soldiers were banging at the massive doors.

The fat monarch of Sandrakar took charge of the situation. He now gave the order that soldiers try the only other door—the one that led into the temple from the little compound where the dragon was kept.

Fear of the green monster held the scouting party back for a time. But Ram Chan, having given them the key to the dragon gate, bullied them on. And the scouting party returned shortly with the amazing information that the dragon was gone! He was, it appeared, inside the temple with the two white barbarians!

This rumor went from mouth to mouth in a rising roar of wonder and incredulity. Hysteria and supernatural

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fear took hold of the mob. Soldiers and citizenry alike backed away from the great north door and stared at the temple with awe and speculation.

Ram Chan, who feared no dragons, was the only man who dared approach that silent door. And as he approached, it opened. And as it opened, a roar of terror went up from those closely packed thousands.

For within the doorway was an awesome apparition. It glowed as spirits in the half-world are said to glow, with a strange and horrible pale fire. And as the mob stared and Ram Chan, no longer self-confident, fell back a step, the apparition took form, with waves of white fire shimmering about it.

A tall man with golden hair—a tall man, naked to the waist—was striding with slow, majestic steps toward them. His face, his arms, his hands, his chest glowed and shivered with unholy fire. In his upheld hand was the end of a long leather strap. At the other end of this strap, or leash, was the green dragon of Sandrakar!

The great lizard seemed to have grown to twice its usual size, an illusion that was no doubt due to the fiery glow which surrounded him like an obscene halo. Meekly, obediently, the lizard followed the white man, slowly, but willingly, step by step.

But the marvel did not end with that. Sitting coolly astride the glowing green monster was the priestess of this temple—a creature of dazzling splendor, in a robe as white as the snows which glistened on the distant moonstruck Himalayan peaks. Her chin was high. Her air was scornful.

The sudden uproar of the mob was instantly silenced. Only Ram Chan, it appeared, was not taken in by this amazing spectacle. Alone, halfway up the temple steps, he stared and began yelling commands at his soldiers.

Their failure to obey, set him into a frenzy. In his shrill, rasping voice he ordered them to fire. But for once in his life, Ram Chan was not obeyed. Supernatural fear held his soldiers in a clammy, paralyzing grip.

And with a final shriek of rage, the fat monarch took matters exclusively into his own hands. He whipped from its sheath at his plump middle a long and wicked knife that glittered. He leaped, not at the glowing demi-god who led the dragon, but at the perfidious goddess on its back.

Peter had not been prepared for this. He had assumed that even if Ram Chan were in the multitude, he, too, would have been too deeply impressed to move. He had not counted on Ram Chan's amazing shrewdness.

HE did not have time to whirl about and defend Susan from that utterly unexpected attack. But even as Peter, faltering in that slow, deliberate stride, looked back, the dragon itself had acted. Faster than Peter had ever seen any living creature move, the lizard raised its forelegs, and made a great lunge, as smaller members of his species, almost since time began, have lunged at fat and juicy flies.

The thick neck of Ram Chan was seized in those powerful jaws. There was a sickening snapping sound. And this was the sound of Ram Chan's neck breaking.

For a moment, Peter was frozen by the fear that the giant lizard would now spoil everything by devouring his kill. But the lizard did nothing of the kind. It dropped Ram Chan and, as if fully appreciating the deliberate drama of this astounding spectacle, it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

resumed its slow, grotesque march behind Peter.

Fortunately for the successful carrying out of this stratagem, Susan had not screamed. One hand had flown to her mouth when Ram Chan had leaped. And when the great lizard had lunged at the fat king, she had almost been unseated. Then she had recovered her balance. She did not even glance at the dead monarch as he rolled down the steps. Her chin remained tilted, her eyes uplifted, as if her thoughts never descended lower than the stars.

And except for a short, incredulous gasp, that great mob, with its glistening, spellbound eyes, remained still. It gave way, it moved, with a faint shuffling of bare and sandaled feet, as the man, the dragon and the girl advanced.

Sweating plentifully under the phosphorescent grease, Peter congratulated himself. He had been utterly unprepared for that attack by Ram Chan. He had thought that his plan was ruined. He had thought that Susan would be killed before he could act. And when the lizard had attacked Ram Chan, had snapped the man's neck in those great jaws, Peter was certain that that, too, was the end.

He knew that all members of the lizard family were possessed of very limited intelligence, that their brains, in proportion to their bulk, were smaller than those of any other living creature. Yet it was as if the lizard were cleverly using brains—as if the lizard understood perfectly what all this was about. And it now occurred to Peter that the explanation was much simpler—that the beast, in the months Susan had been virtually a prisoner in the temple, had developed a great affection and a truly dog-like devotion for her. It had leaped so suddenly at Ram Chan, simply because the life of this loved creature on its back was being threatened.

But Peter had no thoughts for further speculation. The mob was parting to let him and the dragon through. And he knew that this strange parade must continue for two miles, perhaps three. The clicking claws of the lizard made the only sound now in a breathless hush. But had this green monster the endurance, or the willingness, to crawl such a distance?

Once it balked, once it refused to take further part in this strange pageant, Peter and Susan would be in a tight corner indeed. He realized that these people were held entirely by the smooth continuity of the performance. It was as if they were under hypnotic influence. But if the big lizard balked, that spell would certainly be broken.

DOWN the street ahead of them the mob surged and swirled. And that street seemed to go on and on forever. No walk that Peter had ever undertaken had seemed quite so long as this one. And another of his worries was Susan's endurance. She was under a terrific strain. She must sit there, eyes front and lifted, hardly daring to move a muscle. She must be, in the eyes of these people, a goddess untouched by earthly stares.

Peter had been in many uncomfortable corners, but he could not recall a dangerous situation that was so prolonged. Any moment, one of these staring, silent people might throw a stone; any moment, one of them might burst into jeering. And it would not take a minute for this mob, suddenly inflamed, to close in and assassinate this striding, fair-haired godlike man, and this haughty princess in her snow-white robes.

But no stones were thrown, no shots

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were fired, no jeers were uttered. Never, in its history, had this remote, barbaric city been so silent. Silent crowds packed the streets and the side-streets. Mobs were lined up on the roofs all along the way.

At the outskirts of the city, where the street they followed joined the road to Khava, Peter anticipated trouble. This awed, perhaps worshipful, mob must not follow. And it was evident that the mob was firmly determined to do nothing else. Perhaps fifty thousand people were in the procession which was strung out now behind the man, the girl and the dragon.

At a brightly lighted bazaar which marked the last northeastern outpost of Sandrakar, Peter turned about and held up his arms. He did not stop. With the golden light from the bazaar flooding him, he lifted his arms and shouted into the silence two words of the language which he knew.

"*Naga lan!*"

They meant: Go back! And for the first time since the lizard had snapped the fat neck of Ram Chan, an audible muttering went through the spellbound mob. It resembled the rippling of a wind through dry leaves. It became, in the distance, a sullen roar.

And it was successful. The mob stopped. Perhaps no one cared to follow this awesome procession of a man, a woman and a dragon into the blackness of the Tibetan night. Perhaps none of them cared to defy the command of a golden-haired god who glowed with unholy fire.

At all events, no one followed. And at the same pace, the god who glowed and the dragon that writhed and shone with the same hellish fire and the goddess who had eyes only for the stars —this amazing trio started down the road for Khava.

When they were safely into the darkness, Susan dismounted. She ran ahead and took Peter's arm. She was shaking uncontrollably, and smothering sobs. It had been a horrible ordeal.

"Now what are we going to do?"

"Keep going," Peter answered. Unless he was badly mistaken, he said, they would find an elephant caravan encamped a few miles farther along the road. It would be the caravansary of the spurious Charlie Ling, who would have left all his men and elephants there, ready for a quick getaway with the great emerald in the lizard's forehead, or the lizard itself, if he could somehow contrive to secure that.

"If I've guessed wrong about the caravansary, we'll walk to Khava," Peter said.

A MASTER of adventurous intrigue, Peter had guessed correctly. Some five miles along the Khava road from Sandrakar they came upon the caravansary. It was busy with preparations for departure. Word had come—delivered by some of Charlie Ling's men who had escaped Ram Chan's soldiers—that Charlie Ling was dead. The camp was being broken up. Elephants were being loaded.

Into this brisk scene, Peter, Susan, and the dragon came and precipitated confusion. Elephants stampeded and mahouts climbed trees.

Peter undertook to restore order. And this voice of stern authority eventually commanded the situation. Elephant men came down hesitantly from their perches, went about the arduous job of rounding up the elephants.

Susan wanted to know what Peter

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intended to do with the "best friend we have on earth."

"Deliver him to Hong Kong. He isn't too much of a load for a big elephant. And at Saigon we'll put him on a steamer."

But the mahouts objected. No elephant would tolerate that green monster as a cargo. Peter suggested blindfolding the largest elephant until the lizard was aboard. And this scheme was eventually successful.

Shortly before dawn, the caravan started for Khava—and the great seaport of south Indo-China. It would be, Peter knew, a journey beset with every sort of peril. Most of the route ran through untraveled, hostile country. But there was no other course now.

Peter started out with a heavy heart. He had devoutly hoped that that tense ride on the lizard through Sandrakar would restore Susan's memory, her old personality. It had done nothing but terrify her.

And as the caravan went down through the foothills and into the swamps and jungles of northern Siam, he cast about in his mind for some method by which he could make the transformation in her.

The journey was half over when he suddenly had the inspiration. Several factors contributed to it. One was his head mahout, who was a tall, powerful man, a Punjabi, who spoke excellent English—a man, it proved, who had graduated from a British college in Bombay. The next stimulus was Peter's happening to see, in one of the few friendly villages through which they passed, a mask hanging before a temple of thatched nipa-palm—a grotesque mask carved of some translucent blue stone resembling sapphire.

Peter halted the caravan and, unknown to Susan, sent back Shan Hatma, the head mahout, to exchange a good rifle for the blue mask. And Shan Hatma returned without the rifle, but with a bulge at his breast and a certain light in his handsome brown eyes.

Shan Hatma had told Peter how the spurious Charlie Ling had come to be in charge of the caravan. He offered, at least, a reasonable explanation. This caravan had been bought and assembled in Burma by Judd Burton. The famous animal collector had placed Shan Hatma in charge, had instructed him to proceed to Khava, where Charlie Ling would join them. Shan Hatma had never known or seen the real Charlie Ling, nor had any of the other men in the caravan. The impostor had reached Khava with ample credentials from Judd Burton, and Shan Hatma had taken his authenticity for granted. How the impostor had secured these credentials from the real Charlie Ling, or what the latter's fate had been, no one, in all probability, would ever know.

The head mahout fell readily in with Peter's proposed scheme for shocking Susan into normality. But there were many details to arrange, other materials to secure. One of these was blue glass. Another temple along the line of march provided Peter with what he wanted. This was a temple in what had one time been prosperous farming country. Many years ago, the village had been abandoned. The jungle had reclaimed it.

AS the elephants plodded through the single village street, with its underbrush now as high as a tall man, Peter heard the familiar tinkling of wind bells. These were tiny strips of glass, perhaps three inches long by an inch in width. They were strung

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

close together along the eaves, and when a breeze agitated them, the little pieces of glass would give out a shivering sweet song. Some of them were colored—green, blue, red. And from this source Peter secured the blue glass he needed for his experiment.

The scheme he had in mind was, in a way, cruel and rather dangerous. It was to confront Susan suddenly and unexpectedly with the man whom, in the old days, she had feared and dreaded more than any man she had ever known. He was a wealthy and powerful Chinese named Mr. Lu, to whom fabulous things were ascribed. He was said to be hundreds of years old. He was said to have been all but killed in youth, in a fall from a high cliff. And a great surgeon of the time was said to have replaced his ruined brain with a magic brain of purest kingfisher jade. Dwelling in the remote mountain fastness of his castle in the impenetrable Shan Mountains, he exercised his malevolent power over thousands of people.

What truth there may have been in any of the stories told about this human monster—the "man with the jade brain"—Peter had never been able to learn with any real satisfaction. He knew only that Mr. Lu was powerful, exceedingly clever and very dangerous. And he had verified one incredible rumor—that Mr. Lu was a man without a face; that instead of a face Mr. Lu had gone through most of his life with a repulsive, horrible oval of gray scar tissue.

In a temple not far from where he had received his latest inspiration—the Temple of the Coiled Serpent—Peter had, in hand-to-hand conflict, killed or mortally wounded this powerful Chinese who had no face. And Susan had seen this fight to the death.

Yet it was certain that, behind that closed door of memory she still loathed and dreaded Mr. Lu, and that he had stood, in her imagination, for the most terrifying human being on earth.

It was Peter's plan to confront Susan unexpectedly with the apparition of this man whom she had feared and hated so. Since his reunion with Susan, he had told her very little about Mr. Lu. He knew she would be terrified. He knew that it was a cruel trick. But there was no choice.

And so Shan Hatma had been taken into the conspiracy, and so, in time, had all the other mahouts and servants of the caravan, and this was dangerous, for the scheme might be spoiled by the very superstitious and supernatural fears which controlled these brown men.

And one night, after the evening meal, the scheme was tried. On it, Peter staked his last hope of resurrecting the Susan he had known.

They were seated and lying in a circle about the camp fire in a clearing in the western Cambodian jungle—a dozen of them, including Peter, Susan, and the mahouts. Each man was, in turn, telling the story of his greatest adventure, his closest squeak with death. And these were strange and stirring stories. Susan sat beside Peter, staring into the fire. She did not understand the language of these story tellers, but their voices stirred her to dreamy contemplation of the red coals and the leaping flames.

SUDDENLY, beyond the fire, appeared the apparition—a tall figure in blue wearing what appeared to be a sapphire mask. He seemed to emerge magically from the blue mists of the jungle night. And as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he stepped forth, with arms folded majestically on breast, blue lights about him began to glow like will-o'-the-wisps. These lights shed upon the apparition a blue and unearthly glow.

In bewilderment and growing alarm, Susan stared at the tall, ominous figure in blue. Suddenly, she seized Peter's arm. She cried, "Look!" and pointed.

Peter looked in that direction. He said, in a puzzled tone, "What is it?"

"That man in blue!" she cried.

"But there's nothing there," he protested.

"There is! Look! That tall man with—with the blue thing—the mask over his face!" She was trembling.

The mahouts who had been telling stories stopped. As one man, the mahouts turned to peer where Susan was pointing. They shook their heads. No, *memsahib*, nothing was there—nothing but the blue mists of the jungle.

The man in the sapphire mask was slowly approaching. The light playing upon him seemed to grow more dazzlingly blue. It glinted on the polished angles of the sapphire mask. In its eyeholes, eyes glittered malignantly.

Thus had Mr. Lu looked to Susan when she had climbed the long steps leading into the Temple of the Coiled Serpent, when, believing Peter dead, she had ventured an attack upon the life of Mr. Lu. Thus had Mr. Lu looked when, despite her clever disguise as a Chinese maiden, he had known who she was, had spoken her name! Doubtless it had been the most terrifying moment of her life.

The apparition in blue had stopped on the other side of the fire, beyond the ring of mahouts.

Susan uttered a little scream of terror.

"Peter!" she cried. "I—I can't be imagining it! He's coming closer!"

And he repeated, soothingly, "But there's no one there, Susan, or we would see him. You must have a touch of the sun."

"No, no! He's there!" she sobbed. "Wearing a sapphire mask—blue robes! He's looking at me!"

"Perhaps we'd better give you a bigger dose of quinine," Peter said.

She did not hear him. She was starting to her feet. She would have fled if Peter had not seized her hand and pulled her back. She was shivering. Her teeth were chattering. She stared at the apparition in blue.

And for the first time, the tall and sinister figure spoke—uttered in a harsh and awful voice, the words: "Miss O'Gilvie, I—want—you!"

She screamed again. "Peter!"

"What is it?"

"You heard him!"

"I heard nothing."

"Miss O'Gilvie," that dreadful voice spoke again, "I—want—you—to—come!"

"No!" she screamed. Her hand had flown to her convulsing mouth. She was gnawing her knuckles in terror.

And then the man in blue removed the sapphire mask. And the leaping flames of the fire played upon what had been beneath—not a human face, but what appeared to be an area—a horrible area—of gray scar tissue, with holes where the eyes were, holes where the nostrils were, and an awful slit for a mouth.

SUSAN snatched her hand away from Peter. She was screaming on a high, sustained note. But she didn't run. She stared for a moment at that hideous thing—as she had once

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stared in horror at the oval of scar tissue which had served Mr. Lu for a face — and then she collapsed. And Shan Hatma withdrew into the jungle.

She did not quite faint. She was breathing hard in little gasps, and Peter, in an agony of suspense, waited.

Susan seemed to shake herself. Then she sat up and stared in bewilderment at the faces about the fire, then at Peter. Her eyes, it seemed to the agonized young man, were actually changing, as if an invisible veil were being withdrawn. Never had he seen those eyes so brightly violet in color.

She stared at him, as if in dazed wonderment, and gasped, "Why, Peter! I have the funniest—" She stopped. She shook her head a little. "That tower. I was on top of that tower!" She put her hand over her eyes, then snatched it away and looked at him again. The vague look was gone. She began to smile, and this was not the shy smile of the Susan he had come to know in these past few weeks, but the gay, thrilling smile of the real Susan.

She cried: "You old humbug! You old devil! Why, darling!" She threw her arms about his neck. She kissed him. She began to laugh. Peter tried to laugh, but couldn't.

"You almost scared the living daylights out of me!" she cried. "It was Shan Hatma! What a perfectly marvelous piece of acting!"

She was gazing into his eyes, still laughing a little, with her hands on his shoulders.

"Darling! How utterly weird it all is! Now I remember the whole thing —and it's simply incredible that I didn't know you when I saw you!" She clutched him. "Why, it just doesn't seem possible that I couldn't remember you—and—and everything we'd ever done together. And it's so unbelievable that I didn't *know* you—and then fell in love with you all over again. Oh, I think it's perfectly priceless, darling!"

She shook him a little. "Oh, Peter, Peter, how swell it is to be with you again!"

He caught her into his arms, held her fiercely and kissed her. And when he let her go again, she cried: "Darling! You didn't have any use for me!" She was laughing again. She tilted up her head and, still laughing, kissed him. "You positively loathed me!"

"No," Peter denied.

"You did! I don't blame you! What a sissy I was! What a little simp I was! Peter, tell me you like me better this way! Tell me you adore me!"

"I do."

"Peter—darling—wouldn't it have been simply awful if I'd never remembered? Wouldn't it have been too utterly frightful if I'd just gone on and on like that? It was so clever of you to think of Mr. Lu. But you are clever. You're so damned clever I positively couldn't live without you. Tell me you adore me, Peter!"

Peter had wondered if—provided her old memory was restored—she would retain her more recently acquired memory. It was very apparent that she had. And with the recovery of old memory, it was quite obvious that with it was restored her old personality.

The rest of that long journey to the coast of the China Sea was, to Peter, a march of triumph. For Susan, despite that lapse of memory and personality, had lost none of her gayety, her vivacity, her high spirits.

She insisted that they would be married by the very first person they met who was qualified to do so. And they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would never, never be separated again. It was a Methodist missionary in Angkor who read the marriage service.

TO Peter it was the most exciting moment of his life. Compared to it, all their other adventures together paled.

As the voice of the missionary bound them together, Peter looked down at Susan's lovely face. Her lips were parted and her violet eyes were bright. She sent him an adoring glance.

He grinned at her. He was very happy.

And when it was over and he kissed her, Susan said, "I just can't believe it, Peter! I'm so happy! I simply can't believe that after all we've been through, we're finally married. The way I pursued you, and you'd have none of me—"

"And then I'd change my mind and pursue you, and then you didn't want me!"

"And then the time I thought you were dead, and then you— Oh, darling, isn't it grand that it's all over!"

They left Angkor that evening on a river steamer for Saigon. Shan Hatma was left in charge of the caravan.

Peter would, he said, get in touch with Judd Burton, and Mr. Burton, who owned the elephants, would give Shan Hatma instructions by cable or mail.

In Angkor Peter had built a large and comfortable crate of teakwood for the dragon of Sandrakar. In Saigon, this crate was transferred to a steamer bound for Hong Kong. And in due course, the fabled dragon was delivered to the delighted Judd Burton in Hong Kong, and Peter was duly paid the $10,000 which they had agreed upon.

Peter and Susan remained in Hong Kong for a few days. Susan did not want to leave the dragon. The strange creature had truly been a faithful friend.

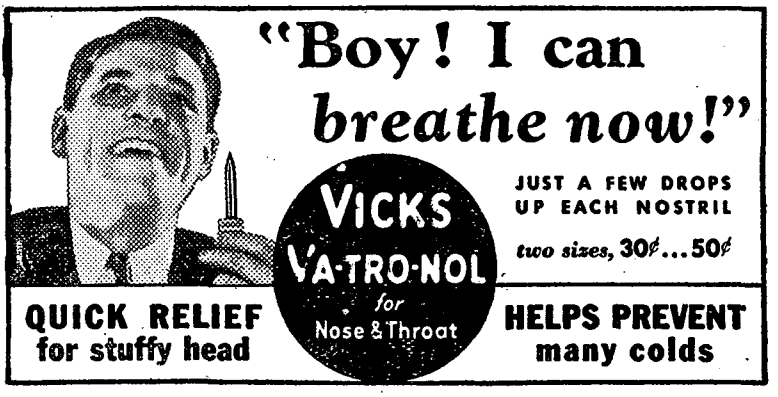
She was fond of it.

She had, she said, so much money—why couldn't she buy it back from Mr. Burton?

Peter tried to argue her out of it. In part, he succeeded. But she insisted on going to see the lizard before they sailed for America.

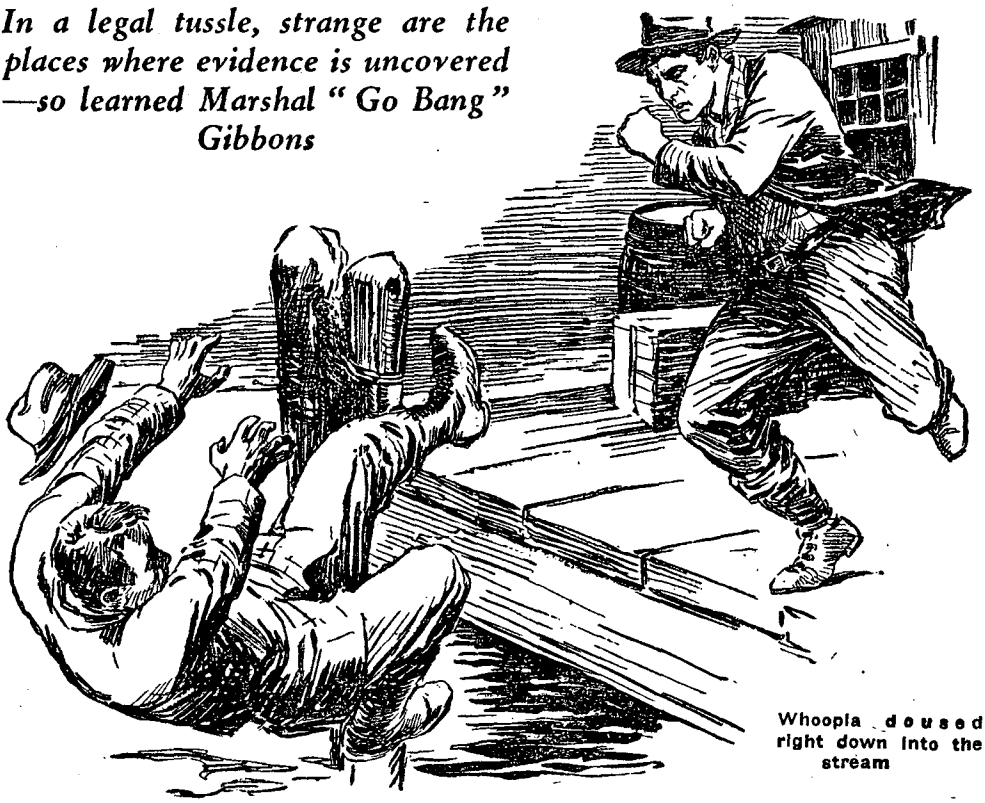
Mr. Burton himself took her to the great pen where the lizard was being kept until he should begin his sea voyage to the United States.

THE END



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In a legal tussle, strange are the places where evidence is uncovered —so learned Marshal "Go Bang" Gibbons



Whoopla doused right down into the stream

Hind Hide

By H. H. MATTESON

A TENDER warps in at the Apex Cannery dock and I and Go Bang Gibbons is checking the fish, when this Billy McCarthy breaks out the news. "Hind Hide Kerris has got licked at last," says Billy, "and licked so good he's been in bed over to the Pant's Patch camp now it's three whole days."

Hind Hide Kerris get licked? No, no. Who can lick Hind Hide Kerris?

"I don't know who licked him," says Billy, "but I know he's at the Pant's Patch all stove and derelict, and this Hogmeat, the little cook being in a way a doctor, is trying to revive him up."

One of the pitching crew is holding up one hand, and telling off fingers, and we see he's reviewing all candidates who possibly could 'a' licked Hind Hide Kerris.

"Hoedown Holliday might 'a' licked him."

"No," says Billy, "it was Hoedown found Hind Hide helpless adrift in a skin boat, and took him into the Pant's Patch."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Maybe then it was Bigpaw Cinnamon."

"Bigpaw hain't here. He's up to Pribilof with the sealing crew."

"Then it was Lolo Benner, The Load."

"Never. The Load and Hind Hide was *tillicums*. I hear The Load say personal if ever Hind Hide organized for war on a big scale to get his rights, he, The Load, would admire to enlist."

With them three notable fighting men checked off the list, this fish hand begins staring hard at Go Bang Gibbons. He's easy a logical candidate, Go Bang, is.

"Not me, gents," says Go Bang. "While, in line of duty, I had to arrest this Hind Hide likely a dozen times, we're no ways enemies."

Naming them four cleans up the list of anybody in the far Aleutians having any chance to lick Hind Hide Kerris. But I see, from the cock of his ear, Go Bang has ideas. Him acting as deputy United States Marshal on occasions, Go Bang gets facts and information confidential which he don't reveal out to me.

About noon, Go Bang says to me to steam up the ship, that we'll squander over to the Pant's Patch and see how this Hind Hide is coming on. Starting out, I see, Go Bang is pondering very grave.

"Time will come, Kapsu," he says to me, "when this feud so deadly between Hind Hide and Weg Mallory will end in bloody tragedy."

"You don't figure possible it was Weg Mallory licked Hind Hide?" I asks.

"No, no. This Weg hain't got the *tumtum* of a sick puffin bird. Anyway, a man with a million, his hand fighting is done for him. Similar, a rich man gets his legal fighting done for him, too. And this Weg has always been able to prove Hind Hide hain't got no claims on him whatever."

Go Bang don't say no more till we're approaching the spit where this Baranov, a half-breed Russian, keeps his *heehee*. This *heehee*, a dance hall, and a saloon similar, is all ways disreputable, though many occasions is held there that's plenty joyful and diverting.

"Haul out by Baranov's dock," says Go Bang. "I got suspicions regarding this fight, and if so, I gets them verified right here."

We put up, and when the clank of the engine quits, we hear a terrible yell emanate out of the *heehee*, and the crash of glasses and bottles getting throwed.

We prance on up to the *heehee* and go on in, and a terrible skookum young white man is setting by a table, completely surrounded by Aleuts and breeds to who he's slopping out drinks liberal.

This generous host is plenty drunk and loud and boastful.

"Which I licked this Hind Hide so easy it was plumb disgusting," this party bellers out. "Oh, yes, blood always was my color. When I get organized good, and in action, I just mows 'em down."

This vehement party, I see, is about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, and constituted all ways for a fighter. He's a bigger man than either Go Bang or Hoedown Holliday, and comes closter to the bulk and beam of Bigpaw or The Load.

"Why, gents," he screams at the Aleuts and breeds, not having noticed I and Go Bang arriving in, "I'd take it most kind would you make mention to me of other fighting gents amongst the far Aleutians. Where, where is the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

skookum pukpukers of the archipelago?"

This belligerent party kind of leans sideways to spit copious at a box of sand, and ketches sight of I and Go Bang. Go Bang walks over sedate and kind of touches this warrior on the shoulder.

"Might I inquire your name, stranger?" says Go Bang, plenty soft and placating.

This party stands up prompt, his attitude denoting how he's ready to fight. But Go Bang holds up a hand placating.

"My name?" says the stranger. "Why, account of I generally always announces my victories over innumerable fallen foes, by emitting out a steamboat yell, they calls me Whoopla Norris. Who might you be?"

"Gibbons, my name, Go Bang Gibbons."

"OH, so, Mister Gibbons? And do you-all arrive insurging in responsive to my wide flung invitation to fight all comers?"

"No, no," says Go Bang very soft. "I hain't honing to fight. I heered about you, Whoopla, right smart, and I wants to take a observation personal. It's recorded, how, former, you was bouncer, and handy fighter for that terrible tough dead-fall of a roadhouse above Valdez."

"That's whatever," yells the fighting man offensive. "You got me right. All them tough *tillicums* that infest the Talkeetna, they're my meat. Chances is I licked a thousand. Now if you, Mister Gibbons—"

This Whoopla makes action to shuck off his coat, same being a red and yellow Mackinaw like is wore in the mines country.

"I hain't aiming to fight, Whoopla," says Go Bang indulgent, and I'm all ways amazed at his patience. "But I would like to ask questions. I just happen to know that in the year or so past, Weg Mallory has hired seven or eight *skookum* men for no purpose other than them hired hands was to lick Hind Hide Kerris. Until your arrival, Whoopla, them endeavors ended disastrous for all them minions. Now hain't it the truth, Mister Norris, you esteemed as fighter and bouncer, took a job with Weg Mallory similar?"

"Why, Mister Gibbons, generally always when a gent pokes a snoot inquisitive into my affairs, I'm almost sure to confer a larrup onto same. But you been terrible polite. Besides, I'm mollified down with this here good licker. I feels all ways generous and patient."

The big fighting gent kind of weaves around, and sets down hard in his chair. "Why, yes," he goes on, "Weg Mallory did hire me. He give me a hundred a month to watch trap, my blankets and *muckamuck*. While he didn't say so specific, this Weg give me to understand plain that did I tangle with this Hind Hide, who was dead sure to come surging in to pirate the trap, and did I lick this Hind Hide conclusive, why then, this Weg Mallory was dead sure to act very generous. He done it. He give me two hundred dollars. And I and my *tillicums* is drinking it up fast as we can cargo it down. Ahoy, Baranov, cape to the front with more licker."

While this Whoopla is slopping out more drinks, I observes at him clost. He sure is a *skookum* gent, physical, but by them cat green eyes of hissen and a terrible mean mouth, and shriveled ears I estimates him all ways as a camp rat.

"Now I revealed out my history,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mister Gibbons," he continues on, " if you-all entertains notions of contesting with me, we can very prompt clear a space in this here drink emporium commodious sufficient for I and you to battle in."

I never did see Go Bang Gibbons so timorous before. I figure Go Bang didn't want to take advantages, account of this Whoopla was a little drinking.

" Come off to one side, Whoopla," Go Bang says. " I got words I wants to broach out confidential."

So Go Bang and Whoopla walk over into a corner, and I observe how Go Bang, talking earnest, taps this Talkeetna party on the chest with his finger emphatic.

" *Hiyu!*" yells this Whoopla final. " Sure! I agrees most hearty. She's a go, all ways, *tillicum.*"

Whoopla he insists on shaking hands with Go Bang five or six times, and he teeters back to his table, and I and Go Bang go back to our boat, and warp out for the Pant's Patch, Go Bang not saying nothing of whatever proposal this Whoopla agrees to so ardent, and so we come to the beach, and go on in, and into the Pant's Patch bunk house, and there, setting onto a chair, is a *hiyu* young man, and he's battered most grievous, his skin all over his chest and face being a downright sickly green, and he lifts a hand, kind of feeble, this party does, and he pries open a eye, and regards at us dull, and it's Hind Hide Kerris, and if he hain't been licked terrible and complete, well then nobody never was.

CAPERING around the sick patient is this little Hogmeat, the vest pocket sized cook of the Pant's Patch, and he's slopping this vodka whisky into his little palm, and clapping same onto Hind Hide's chest and arms, and rubbing same in vigorous.

" Massaging alcohol into a stove up party's system is terrible good treatment," says this Hogmeat authoritative, " and all ways superior to placing same below hatches via the gullet or esophagus.

I and Go Bang greet this stricken Hind Hide, and we walk over, and I see, and Go Bang sees, spite of the green bruises, a terrible striking tattoo onto his chest. It's a tattoo picture of two men, shaking hands, in bright red, and acrost is two fish, noses touching in blue.

Hind Hide, still holding an eye open, seen us observing at that tattoo, and modest as any woman, he picks up his shirt and holds it acrost him.

It must 'a' been Hind Hide, seeing us look at the tattoo, fetches up ideas that's associated.

" Go Bang," he says, " you got any ideas wherever I could locate this party, they call him Bilge Wash?"

This Bilge Wash, I got to explain, is a all ways disreputable party that used to disperse amongst the islands here, playing a fiddle in the *heehees,* and drinking plenty when favorable, and, odd times doing tattoo jobs for fish hands and cod and sealing crews.

" Why, Hind Hide," Go Bang says, " last I know of Bilge Wash he was in jail in Junea. It's no ways likely this Bilge Wash will ever return back to the islands here account of a warrant lays against him."

" A warrant, for Bilge Wash? For what?"

" Why, for stealing five twenty-dollar gold pieces offen Weg Mallory."

" Then he won't never come back," says Hind Hide disappointed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Speaking of warrants," says Go Bang, kind of beginning to grin, "I got a document here that's both a warrant and a writ of execution."

Go Bang breaks a paper out of his pocket, hands the same to Hoedown Holliday, the camp boss who's standing there, and he reads, and grins, and hands it to Hogmeat, and he chuckles deep, and passes it to me.

"While I tried terrible hard," Go Bang kind of laughs, "I can't locate this felon none. I looks in Kapsu Corking's pocket, and in the oven, and I can't detect him."

Then I laughs similar. This paper is a warrant for Go Bang to overhaul, and kill that certain pet seal called Tolux, same being the property of Hind Hide Kerris. Further, the paper recites how Hind Hide, with plenty cunning, releases his seal out in Hell Bent channel, thereby terrifying the fish so they don't swim into the lead of the Mallory trap.

Hogmeat, he steps over quiet and shuts the door leading into his galley. But I seen, before he closed the door, this identical Tolux seal, Hind Hide's pet of the which he's passionate fond, laying sound asleep on Hogmeat's little platform.

"I wasn't aiming to discuss none about this fight, Hind Hide," says Go Bang, "but I got grave doubts it was on the level. While this Whoopla from the Talkeetna is likely good, I no ways esteems him capable of defeating you, Hind Hide, without plenty ulterior aids."

"Just a minute," interrupts this Hoedown Holliday. "Hind Hide will lie copious. Leave me break out the reckoning regarding that fight. While the subject is delicate, facts is facts. Hind Hide here, account of he's hard up, hadn't et a bite for three whole days. What little *muckamuck* he had, he give it to Tolux. Hind Hide, his belly scraping acquaintance with his back bone, couldn't 'a' fit a sick water rat."

"Why, Hind Hide, you plumb, egregious, plain damn fool," explodes out Go Bang. "They hain't a fish camp, Kommandrov to the Kuskokwim, that hain't honored and glad of your presence culinary."

"That's whatever," booms Hoedown emphatic. "So long as Hogmeat here can match one bean with another, one of them beans is yourn, Hind Hide."

HIND HIDE he just kind of nods, and turns his head away.

"I got notions serious to bust into you-all myself," says Go Bang, "and learn you good while we're at it. You should ought to have your pants kicked. Stand up, you sculpin, and leave all hands fetch a observation at them notorious pants of yourn."

By then Hind Hide is grinning and he stands up, and turns around, and we all laugh immoderate. We're looking at the pants that give this Kerris his nickname of Hind Hide, and similar that conferred the name of Pant's Patch onto Hoedown Holliday's outfit.

This Kerris, terrible poor, didn't have but one pair of pants, and he's still similar then. He's jigging for cod on a reef, and occupying the only pants he's got, and he slips and sets down hard, and slides on a barnacle rock, and he tore the hull seat out of them tarpaulin trousers.

This here is inconvenient. This hain't just a rip; the seat is gone. So Kerris, he takes a sailor palm and needle that's he's got, and he breaks out a roll of walrus belly leather a native had give him, and he cuts out

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a big round patch, and leaves same onto the seat very neat and durable.

Them pants, with that big patch, is terrible prominent, and he comes to see Hoedown about something, and all hands laugh, including Kerris. And Hoedown, who's searching for a good title for his camp, is inspired, and he names the camp the Pant's Patch, and a hand similar, who's got poeticals in his nature, forthwith confers the name of Hind Hide onto Kerris.

Well, we all laugh, and we get ready to go, and Hind Hide asks, "Is this Talkeetna party who defeated me likely to stay amongst us?"

"Yes," says Go Bang, "he aims to work on for Weg Mallory."

"That's good," says Hind Hide.

Going back, I asks Go Bang something about this feud between Mallory and Hind Hide.

"No one knows exact but the principals," says Go Bang. "Hind Hide and Mallory used to be *tillicums*, partners, and fished together. Then, all at once, Mallory had the trap, and was getting rich, and Hind Hide was starving to death. Hind Hide has done nothing much for two years but pirate the Mallory Trap, and otherwise hector. That's all I know. Or just about."

Several days go by and we don't hear nothing of no fight between Hind Hide and the Talkeetna party. And other days, tho Hind Hide now is all ways as good as he ever was, and Hogmeat has fed him up generous, and I and others don't see why Hind Hide hain't tore into this Whoopla long before.

I see Go Bang Gibbons is worried, and kind of ashamed of Hind Hide. "You know, Kapsu," he says, "a good fighting dog, once whipped, hain't never the same again. Similar with bull seals, and sea lions. Once they get licked decisive, they loose all *tum-tum* entire."

And two weeks has went by since that epochal fight. Lolo Benner, The Load, comes surging into the office. *Hiyu*, there's a man all ways competent to hold and handle a polar bear in each hand.

"Fetch a look at this here visage," says The Load, pointing up at his own wide face, which is plenty obnoxious account of he hain't shaved for a week. "You know why I hain't shaved, Go Bang? I dassent. I'd spit in the mirror. Oh, I'm that humiliated and ashamed. You know, Go Bang, they hain't a tender, even a skin boat passes the Mallory trap, this Talkeetna monster hain't on the watch deck, shouting obscene, and wanting to know where, where is the fighting hands of the Aleutians.

"I just can't stand it. I figure Hind Hide hain't got into condition, tho he do look all ways *skookum*. Now I hain't pirated a trap since Old Mustach Kilroy died. But I aim to. This night I aim to pirate the Mallory trap, and pirate it noisy, and then leave this Whoopla sling his war bonnet on the planks and come a running."

A TERRIBLE jangle ensues up between The Load and Go Bang. There come clost to a fight between them two. But, final, Go Bang drives this Load off home, telling him, domineering, not under no consideration to interfere in affairs of the Mallory trap.

Hoedown Holliday comes in. "I'm to blame for the humiliating inactivity of this Hind Hide," says Hoedown. "I urges him strong to give up hand fighting to win agin Mallory, and to use diplomacy. I overdone it. But no

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

longer can I abide the insults and challenges this Whoopla is hurling around reckless. To preserve the honor of our fish camps, as agin the taunts of this rooster from the Talkeetna, I aim to surge in on him tonight and shuck his tail feathers."

"No, no, Hoedown," expostulates Go Bang. "Not now. Don't broach in. Leave it lay."

And Hoedown, plenty dejected, hain't hardly left the office before a cutter warps in, and a hand comes capering up the trail with a letter for Go Bang. It's from Bigpaw Cinnamon, wrote from Pribilof.

"Malignant rumors has hit here how a party from the mainland has got you-all stampeded. I just know, then, that you and Hoedown, and The Load, must be some way diseased. But I hain't. Sling me a hail and I'll come capering home. I never was in more better health. Bigpaw."

Go Bang don't break out no signal for Bigpaw to return. But other days go by, and they's no fight. Just the same events is transpiring right under my nose of the which I hain't aware, for quite a spell.

Of a sudden, while he never was a teetotal, I observes Go Bang hain't took a drink of no kind of licker for a week. Similar, he's cut down tobacco to a pipe a day. And eating careful. And then, I hear a bang and a whack in the big warehouse, and I peeks furtive through a crack, and there's Go Bang and a hand we got that was a athalete in the army, and him and Go Bang is practicing holts and spar fighting with gloves.

Not even mentioning hostilities, Hind Hide had come in and had asked Go Bang to use the government wireless, and ascertain facts, if possible, regarding the location of this Bilge Wash, the tattooer. Go Bang done that, and the answer come back, and when Hind Hide come over, Go Bang breaks out the news that Bilge Wash died complicated in the Juneau jail.

Hind Hide was disappointed, we could see that.

"I just got to tell you, Hind Hide," says Go Bang, "that Mallory has uttered further complaints agin Tolux, and orders come now from headquarters that this Tolux has got to be killed."

This Hind Hide stands and thinks. "You know, Go Bang," he says, "this here Tolux, in a way, is all I got. I'm terrible fond of him. We've et together, slept together. I'd resent efforts to kill him."

While them words were soft, Hind Hide's face resembled a lot the black square on a hurricane flag.

Then Hind went out. "That there was just a flash of his old fighting spirit," says Go Bang, "but a feeble flash. I'm afraid Hind Hide's glass has run its sand."

Go Bang he stands and thinks deep for a minute, and he sets down at his desk and begins to write. "You-all observe clost at the date of that document, Kapsu," he says, "and similar note the hour mental when I showed it to you."

I reads it over and I'm plumb agash. It's Go Bang's resignation as deputy United States Marshal to take effect immediate. When I hands the paper back to Go Bang he's unpinned his marshal badge, and sticks it to the resignation.

Then he studies the tide table, and walks over and observes out at the weather, and looks at the glass.

"At nine o'clock tonight," he says, "I aim to go careening forth on enterprises. Have the boat ready."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At nine we're under way. I comes top-side, and takes the wheel. "Lay her nor' by a thumb thick west," he says. "And remember, Kapsu, whatever bombards back out of this evening's activities, it was Go Bang Gibbons done it, who's no ways longer a officer of the law."

Well, I'm all a twitter as we approach up to the Mallory trap. A sick moon had broached itself a slit in the fog bank, and I see a shadder of a big man kneeling on the edge of the spiller, looking down into the black water that's all aboil with milling Tyees, and I see this party has got a pike or a boat hook in his hand, and he's stabbing down vicious into the spiller, and a human cry of pain and terror comes wailing out.

"Closter in," says Go Bang, and his voice is shaky, and I just know he's come secret to fight this terror from the Talkeetna.

I spin the wheel to drive our boat in nearer the dock by the watch shanty.

AGAIN and again that wailing cry sounds out of the spiller. But we're still a hawser length from the trap when a party comes stampeding down the plank walk atop the lead, and he's running light on his toes, and he's splitting wind, and account of this Whoopla is so plumb engrossed stabbing into the spiller, he don't hear this approach, until this invading party sets a hand into his shoulder, and yanks him back violent, and a swinging belt knocks the pike pole out of his hands, and that same lick, swishing on, connects with the face of the fighting hand from the Talkeetna, and knocks him clean acrost the planks, and agin the watch shanty that liked to of rocked it off into the stream.

Stronger the moon works through. Standing out clear is them two *hiyas*, Whoopla Norris and Hind Hide Kerris.

When this Whoopla hits the shanty, he bounced off, and he hit traveling, and he come seething back at Hind Hide.

Oh, but this Hind Hide Kerris was deadly. Clear against the moon, we see him measure deliberate, and time his *chukkin* exact, which he starts this swing from the seat of them famous pants, and you can hear it sing like a bullet when he leaves it go, and he plunks same into Whoopla amidships, and the Talkeetna party soars into the air, and claws to grab a fender pile, and keeps on going, dousing right down into the stream and this maniac of a Hind Hide over the side after him.

Whoopla pops up, and Hind Hide goes after him like a killer whale, and they submerge down, and the threshing of the frantic Tyees in the spiller is no ways like the boiling of them depths with Whoopla and Hind Hide fighting there below.

Whoopla comes up, and swims frantic to the ladder, and up he climbs, and Hind Hide right after him, and Whoopla doubles a leg and kicks down vicious at Hind Hide's head.

Then Whoopla just swarms up the rest of that ladder, and jerks around, and all organized to kick Hind Hide in the face when he comes up.

But this Hind Hide hain't on no ladder. That kick missing, Hind Hide had jumped clean off the ladder, made fast into the thick rope of the down haul, and had went monkey scrambling up, and he come at Whoopla kind of side winding, and he slams in the terriblest belt, and Whoopla spins, and collapses down, and he's out cold, and they hain't a doubt.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By then we're up alongside, and we see this Hind Hide shinning down the down haul that's inside the spiller, and he reaches and he lifts out this Tolux seal, and carries him tender to the deck.

If you all ever heard a hurt seal scream, you foller when I say old hands as we be, we was no ways sure it wasn't a human Whoopla had been stabbing at with the pike pole.

Tolux, chasing a Tyee gleeful, had took out after one that made for the trap lead, and on through the tunnels into the heart, pot and spiller. With the first stab into his shoulder, Tolux set up his frantic cry, and this Hind Hide, setting in a skin boat, whether he'd weakened on e v e r fighting Whoopla again or not, he didn't loiter none then.

Observing exclusive at the fight, and then Tolux, where Hind Hide is feeling him over, and talking fond foolish at him, we hadn't noticed the party standing in the door of the watch shanty. It was Weg Mallory. No fish belly was ever whiter than him, and no larch bush in the gale any shakinger.

Estimating how Tolux hain't hurt fatal, Hind Hide gets up offen the planks, and he walks over to Weg Mallory, and he talks just like him and Weg had the whole Bering Sea to themselves exclusive.

"Weg," says Hind Hide, "you-all laid out them five twenty-dollar pieces, knowing Bilge Wash was weak, you aiming to scare Bilge Wash off with warrants so he would never come back. You done it. Now Bilge Wash is dead, and can't give evidence for me. But I'm wondering if they hain't some man into you at that? Half of this trap belongs to me."

"You hain't got proof," says Weg, and while he's plumb terrified, the greed into him is stronger still. "You hain't got proof."

"You remember, Weg—don't lie now—I and you fished partners. We swore and promised we'd fish together, share everything equal."

"You hain't got proof."

"I SPOTTED this identical fish location where this trap stands. You know it. Trusting you, like I swore to, I wasn't in no sweat when you disappeared off mysterious, and come back after filing the location in just your name, you alone."

"You hain't got proof."

"I have got proof, you sculpin! I have! I have!"

Acting like he aimed to take Mallory all apart, Hind Hide shoots out a hand, fastens onto the fronts of Mallory's two shirts, and snakes the fronts of them shirts clean offen him.

"Say, I hain't got proof! There! There!"

Just acting crazy, Hind Hide yanks open his own shirt, and he points to Mallory's chest, and there onto the chests of them two is the same identical tattoos of two men shaking hands, and two fish.

"Bilge Wash was my witness, you rat," Hind Hide screams. "Bilge Wash hears I and you swear and agree to share equal always, and right off, saying it's a spook sign of good luck, me being born in the Zodiac of the twins, and you of the fish, he tattoos them pictures, as witness of the agreement between I and you, to fish together, and share like brothers twin."

Go Bang steps over, and his voice is some dead chilly. "It's so, hain't it, Mallory? To me, them tattoo signs is conclusive. It's so, hain't it?"

Mallory nods his head, and whispers, "Yes, it's so."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Then all hands aboard our boat, including Tolux, and the fallen warrior from the Talkeetna," yells Go Bang.

Tolux is lugged aboard by Hind Hide, and I and Go Bang pack this fire eater on, and Weg Mallory gets on reluctant, and away we go.

We arrive up at the Apex. Go Bang pokes his resignation in the hell box, pins back his badge and organizes to write documents. It's a half and half agreement between Weg and Hind Hide, and I witness, and even this Whoopla contrives to put down a name.

"Go Bang," I says inquisitive, "whatever secret confab did you-all have that time in the *heehee* with this Whoopla here?"

"Why, I says how I had doubt he ever licked Hind Hide on the level. And I says further if Hind Hide, in reasonable time, don't come back and lick him, why I will. Tonight, I was aiming to try."

"Oh, la," groans this Whoopla, after he's inquired the time of the packet boat back to the mainland, "tomorrow I aim to take what's left of me back to the Talkeetna where life is more calmer and serene."

Sure, Hind Hide now has pants sufficient for the Russian army.

Tolux? He's getting terrible fat. He mainly just lollygags around Hind Hide's *barabara*.

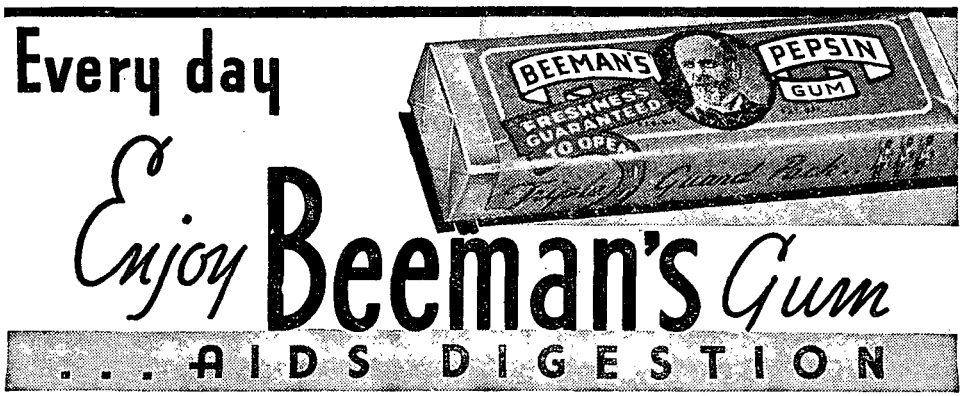
He don't hunt none, Tolux don't. He don't have to. Fish abundant is brung to him every day.

THE END

Man Shot by Rabbit

SINCE the beginning of time, sportsmen have been killed or injured in freak accidents. Recently in Budapest a hunter was shot by a rabbit he had bagged. He had fastened the hare to his belt, believing it dead, but the animal suddenly took a new lease on life, kicked out, discharging the hunter's gun. The man was severely wounded.

—*Franklyn Powderly.*



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Novelette—Complete

Tomorrow We Die

By GEORGE BRUCE
Author of "Catapult," "Launch Planes," etc.

CHAPTER I.

FEUD'S BEGINNING.

TO appreciate the feud between Garrity and Strong and the fact that it had continued over twenty years of history within the Corps, it would be necessary for one to approximate a red corpuscle in the life stream of the United States Marines. It would be difficult for anyone not a Marine to understand the feud and its nature. Its existence was known to every man who wore the Globe and Anchor on his hat and tunic collar between the years of 1901 and 1918.

The amazing thing is that it all began over a puppy. An Imperial puppy, it is true; not an ordinary mongrel or thoroughbred in the common sense of the term, but the puppy of an Emperor or, perhaps, an Empress.

In 1899, Bill Strong was a raw boned, lantern-jawed kid shaped out of raw hide and barrel staves. He was fresh out of his native Tennessee mountains, and the soft drawl of the South fell out of his mouth like the passage of water coursing over the rounded stones of a mountain stream. He was long legged and ridiculously tall. His body was tanned a nut brown from the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tennessee sun, and the moment the recruiting sergeant saw him and saw his queer steel-blue eyes, he knew that the Marine Corps had uncovered another distinguished marksman.

There was a history behind Strong even at eighteen and before he trudged the long miles to " town " and enlisted in the Corps. The history was written in the blood of men who had died in the laurel covered hillsides of those Tennessee mountains and against the granite rocks of the foreboding hills. It was punctuated with the barking of long barreled rifles and formed into chapters by succeeding generations of Strongs and Palmers, who were the historians.

Some said that Bill Strong had killed his first Palmer at the age of twelve. Some argued that he was all of fifteen before he took an active hand in the hostilities between the Strongs and the Palmers. No matter, Bill Strong was well versed in the ways of feuding before he came into the Corps and before he ever saw the black Chow puppy.

He came into the Marines in blue jean pants, a home spun shirt and a black felt hat and with mountain " brogans " on his feet. He had a long barreled squirrel rifle over his shoulder, and his eyes passed swiftly from face to face and were laden with suspicion of everyone.

From the great Throne Room in the Forbidden City to shelled trenches in France—what a span of adventure for these two rival Marines!

" Mein Gott!" exploded the Major

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I hearn tell that you-all are a-lookin' for likely men for sojers," he told the Recruiting Sergeant, "so I reckoned I'd come on down to town and jine up."

The Recruiting Officer was no fool. He knew men. He snatched at William Strong.

IN 1899 Michael J. Garrity was a red faced, freckle covered, bandy legged Irishman with an infectious grin, bright blue eyes and a barrel chest. He was never anything else. He was five feet eight inches with the muscles of a beer barrel bouncer. He had a thatch of iron-red hair and a thick neck. The devil lurked in the depths of his eyes and at times laughed aloud from Garrity's mouth. He had hands like hams, and a twenty-two inch waist. A slip of a girl accompanied him to the recruiting office in New York the day he enlisted and wept copiously as he signed the papers. He was completely disrespectful and the Recruiting Sergeant had slapped him alongside the jaw before he was in the Marine Corps twenty minutes. Whereupon the said Michael J. Garrity, with complete disregard for discipline and good order, did assault his immediate superior. In fact, he wiped up the floor of the Recruiting Office, with the Recruiting Sergeant in person.

And he went to the Boston Navy Yard for his recruit training with a tag tied to him proclaiming him a tough egg. A dozen sergeants and corporals had a hand at ironing the toughness out of him in the following three months, but the worst Garrity ever got was a draw. After the non-coms grew tired of breaking hands on Garrity's hard head or against his seemingly punch-proof jaw, they gave up personalities and concentrated on the business of transforming Garrity into a Marine. In this they were fifty per cent successful. They taught him the Manual of Arms, Salutings, Facings, The School of a Soldier, Squad Movements, How to Take a Bath (according to regulations), the correct care of his feet and teeth, when and where to change his socks, and how to pack a pack. They taught him the business-like way to handle a bayonet, and they qualified him as a sharpshooter. But they couldn't impress upon him the sacredness and dignity of the Corps. They simply got nowhere with the task of instilling within Garrity tradition and history of the service. He was not interested in the Halls of Montezuma nor even in the Shores of Tripoli. He was interested in the fact that he had heard that Marines were practically everywhere on the face of the globe where fighting was going on at the minute and he wanted to be led to those places without too much delay.

Early in 1900 he went to sea for the first time, bound for the Philippine Islands, where, it was rumored, certain and sundry "goo-goos" were in insurrection against the United States of America.

The ship touched at Norfolk to take on more likely candidates for "goo-goo" chasing in the Philippines, and William Strong, ex-Tennessee mountain boy, was one of the score who marched up the gangway and shoved off across the Pacific Ocean.

The Marine Corps nearly lost a recruit on that voyage. Garrity was seasick for ten days.

The Philippines in those days would have killed the ordinary man. But there was not an ordinary man in the Marine Corps. As it was, they staggered and floundered through swamp and jungle on the track of little brown ghosts who had the nasty habit of shooting out of the green blankness of the jungle, or of sneaking up like shadows in the night and cutting off a man's head with a single sweep of a bolo and of sticking the head up on a pole where the Marines were sure to see it the first thing in the morning.

The sun was hotter in those jungles than all the furnaces of hell, and the steam from the swamps swirled about their heads and mixed with the sweat of their staggering bodies. They marched along those jungle trails and over the trackless wastes with staring eyes and with mouths rasping dry with fever. They fell on their faces, struck by poisoned arrows, stung by insects, ripped apart across the middle by attacks of drug maddened natives who believed the short-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

est way to heaven was to kill a Marine. They starved, sweated, were wasted away by fever and disease. They cursed and raged and bayoneted when they had something to bayonet, but for the most part they plunged headlong after giggling shadows luring them to destruction.

AFTER the first month of the "goo-goo" hunt it was impossible to tell the veterans from the recruits. They were all crazy together.

And then they jumped out of there across more expanse of the Pacific because a secret society in China called the "Boxers" had decided to kill off all of the white people in China, and to preach the heresy of China for the Chinese.

They saw China across a swirl of muddy water and lit by gun fire from the Allied fleet as it reduced the batteries ashore and made preparations to land forces on Chinese soil. There were stories rife aboard the ships of white men being cut down and put to the torture, of white women being attacked and tossed into the streets, of the Compound piled high with the dead.

The Marines went ashore with froth on their lips, clutching their Krags and looking for trouble. They found the streets thronging with the soldiers, sailors and Marines of a half-dozen nations. After a while they were on the march to Peking.

If the jungle swamps of the Philippines had been bad, the march to the Holy City of China was worse. If the sun had been hotter than hell in the Islands, it was hotter than ten hells on those Chinese plains. The dust rolled over the columns in great, heavy, choking clouds. Men fell out of the columns by the dozen, clutching at throats and begging for water which did not exist. That is, men who wore other uniforms. The United States Marines thrust their heads down, glared up into the brazen bowl of the sky, and marched on.

It became a business of driving the Chinese out of every collection of hovels, away from every dike along the banks of every river. Gingal slugs tore men apart—great guns that required three men to hold, with fire and aim greatly loved by the Chinese, firing a slug weighing a pound. Day after day, night after night, with the nights even more terrible than the days, and with bodies going to skin and bone under the lash of fever, hardship, and dysentery.

And at last, as if seeing a beautiful vision on the tail end of a nightmare, they came to Peking, and looked at its walls and its wonders.

They stormed the gates, mopped up the streets, all the way to the Gates of the Forbidden City. The Chinese were frantic, dying like flies to defend this Holy of Holies. They swarmed the walls and threw down fireballs, mixed with modern rifle and pistol fire, and the boom and thud of the trusty gingal. In the midst of that hysteria an American lieutenant of Marines earned an everlasting name for himself by walking forward in the face of the fire, calmly making a chalk-mark cross on the gates of the Forbidden City, and then, sauntering back to his battery, ordering the gunners to aim for the chalk mark.

WHEN the gates were down, the Marines stormed into the haven of the Chinese Dynasties . . . onto ground so sacred that it meant death to a Chinese even to approach—onto ground made sacred by five thousand years of history and civilization.

Walpurgis night after that, with rioting soldiery staggering through the streets laden down with priceless plunder. Staggering under loads of sables, each far more valuable than their weight in gold. Staggering under burdens of priceless golden ornaments. Pillage mad, stripping temples and palaces and shrines. Drunk with the lust of conquest. And with the dead littering the streets and choking the little streams. The Chinese were paying the price of offending the white man.

And inside the Forbidden City the Garrity-Strong feud had its inception. Garrity held a fat Chinese at the point of his bayonet. Garrity's eyes were flaming and the battle-lust rioted within him. He had the Chinese backed against the wall, the bayo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

net thrust into a belly dripping with fat. The sweat of death was on the face of the Chinese. He was garbed in rich silks and gold ornaments. He was a person of consequence and he was a eunuch. He squealed like a pig as Garrity's bayonet pricked his flesh through his silk robe. He blubbered and saliva ran down from the corners of his mouth. The Chinese collapsed to his knees. His woman's voice shrieked at Garrity, speaking English.

"Do not kill," he moaned. "I am Tung-yi. I am a Great Person. I can make you rich. I will give . . . anything." He fumbled in the sleeves of his robe. "Look! This is the key and the plan of the treasure room of the Emperor. No one knows where it is but me. I am Tung-yi. Gold . . . more than your wagons can transport. Jewels . . . diamonds, pearls, rubies . . . more than a score of men can carry . . ."

Strong spat in the dust. "Stick the bastard and let's go on," he told Garrity disgustedly. "That's one of them guys that looks after the women."

Garrity's eyes were narrowed. "How do we know you ain't tellin' a lie?" he snarled at the Chinese.

"I will take you," blubbered the eunuch. "Only protect me from the soldiers, and go in the night, and I will take you. . . . I will make you the richest man in the world, and your friend also."

So Garrity didn't drive the bayonet through the eunuch's belly. So far as the eunuch was concerned, he did worse. He drove him throughout the hours of the afternoon, in front of him, as Strong and he went up one street and down the other. And the eunuch dripped sweat, wrung his hands, floundered in his heavy robes, and begged for his life each time Garrity's bayonet tasted of Boxer blood.

When night came Garrity and Strong went a.w.o.l. There was no actual roll call. The men who had stormed the city were spread out over the Palace enclosure like a swarm of locusts. Germans, Americans, Japanese, Italians . . . men in every uniform, and their eyes were rolling with the drunkenness of killing and looting. No officers in the world could have restrained those men. The red glare of a dozen fires lit the plundering of the Imperial City, and bathed in the red light, Garrity and Strong followed the eunuch through the winding pathways of the Forbidden City, until at last they came to the Emperor's Palace, the House of the Great Seals of the Dynasties. There were sentries thrown about the Palace itself to protect it against plundering and destruction, but the eunuch knew his way and he guided them through a maze of pathways and corridors, until at last they stood before the Throne of China, where no soldier had ever before stood.

THE great Throne Room was enormous. They stood there, Strong and Garrity, even their hard-boiled souls stunned by the beauty and magnificence of this place, and awed by the grandeur and richness of the scene. The Throne Room might have been abandoned but a moment before. The robes of the Empress were lying on the floor before the Throne. The room was brilliant with black and yellow and red lacquer. It guittered with the sheen of gold.

Garrity spoke through tight lips. He said: "My God!" His voice seemed to echo the length of the room.

Tears ran down the blank, fat face of the Chinese. He stood there, staring up at the Throne.

Garrity shook himself awake. "Well?" he demanded gruffly of the eunuch. "Get busy!"

The eunuch walked slowly across the mosaic floor of the Throne Room. He inserted a gold key into a half concealed door. The door swung open. There were chests within the room. Heavy, metal strapped chests. The eunuch fitted a key into the first of the chests. He raised the lid. The room was suddenly filled with an irridescent light. It came from the opened chest. It was like a lambent flame. They stared at the glittering contents of the chest.

Garrity said: "My God, this fat balloon wasn't lying!" He forgot the eunuch. He

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took a step forward. His hand reached into the chest. It came out, bearing a heavy necklace of gold, jade, and diamonds.

And then there was a growl behind him. He whirled, his bayoneted rifle still at guard.

There was a black chow standing in the doorway of the treasure room. Midnight black, with green eyes glaring at Garrity and Strong, and its tremendous ruff standing erect. Its mouth was half opened and its fangs bared.

A sob came up into the throat of the eunuch. The chow launched itself through the air, at the throat of the Chinese. The eunuch did not so much as cover his throat with his hands.

There was a low growl from the dog and a spurt of blood. And Garrity drove his bayonet through the dog. There was no sound from the chow . . . dying, it sprang for Garrity, its teeth snapping at his leg.

He kicked it brutally. The dog catapulted through the air. It was dead before it struck the floor.

The eunuch, on his knees, stared at the body of the black chow as he might have stared at the face of God. He covered his face with his hands. His body quivered.

Strong's emotional voice sounded. "Why you—" he told Garrity, "I ought to blow your damned head off for a trick like that. What the hell did you hurt that dog for? He was only doing his job."

"No mongrel is going to take a piece out of my leg," snarled Garrity. "He jumped the Chink, didn't he? The Chink is more important than a damned dog?"

"Not to me," said Strong queerly. "There ain't no white man that would kill a dog like that. . ."

There was a moaning sound from the eunuch. "The Sacred Chows," he said into his hands. "The Imperial Guardians!" He beat upon his bosom with his clenched hands.

Garrity was shaking a little and his face was very white. He snatched at the chest. Stuffed his pockets with the jewels.

"*Come on!*" he growled. "Let's get the hell out of here! This place gives me the creeps. I feel that the walls will fall in any minute. Damn that black dog!"

BUT Strong was standing, looking at the stiffening body of the black chow. He seemed to have lost interest in the chest.

Garrity had to prod the eunuch out of room, back into the Throne Room. "We're going to take you with us," he told the Chinese. "We're going to watch you every minute. Close that door and lock it. We'll come back with something to carry some of this junk away. The hell with trying to move it . . . we'll get a cart." There was a little jagged tone of madness in his voice. The eunuch started to shuffle out of the treasure room.

A black shadow launched itself from the steps of the Throne. Its fangs flashed in the dimly lighted room. It thudded against the chest of the eunuch. It was another of the proud, terrible Imperial Chows. Its eyes were like pools of swirling liquid jade. The eunuch screamed.

Garrity's rifle barked, and he cursed. "That will bring those damned sentries on the run. We've got to get out of here. They've got orders to shoot on sight . . . and they're mostly Japs."

But Strong was staring at the twitching body of the second black chow. He turned slowly. He struck Garrity across the face with the back of his fist and the blood flew from Garrity's mouth.

"I'll slit your guts for that," screamed Garrity. His bayonet came up, lunged for Strong's belly. Strong stepped inside. His fist swung. There was the crack of knuckles on chin. Garrity staggered backward. His body crouched. He dropped his rifle.

"Don't go killing any more dogs," said Strong coldly, "or I'll snatch your head off!"

And then the puppy charged them. He was a little fellow. Midnight black like the two grown dogs. He almost waddled as he came on with a growl in his throat and his eyes glaring. He threw himself

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at Garrity. There was something ridiculous in his frenzy and his attack. He bit Garrity twice before Garrity would recover from the stunning effect of Strong's smash on the chin. He sank his teeth into Garrity's hand and blood streamed down over the fingers. Strong snatched him up from the floor and held his hand over the puppy's muzzle.

They heard a low moaning sound. They saw the eunuch, on his knees, on the bottom step of the Throne bow to the inscription written above the Throne. And then something bright flashed for a moment in the eunuch's hand and he drove the brightness into his chest. His mouth spewed blood over the steps to the Throne. His eyes grew vacant and glazed, and his fat body rolled once and fell heavily to the floor, leaving his fat face to stare up at the unseen heights of the Throne room.

There was a pounding of feet along far off corridors and the drifting voice of an officer giving staccato orders in an unknown language. Garrity and Strong trotted along other corridors, trying to remember how they had been led into the Palace. After a while they found the garden and a wall. They swarmed over the wall just as a bullet from a rifle sang nastily over their heads. And Strong still clutched the black puppy.

The next morning Garrity walked up to Strong. "I want to see you," he said grimly. "Right now . . . and back of camp. There ain't any man living that can smack me on the jaw. . ."

"Ah, forget it," advised Strong. "What the hell do we want to be fighting one another for? We've got enough to do fighting the Chinks." And for answer Garrity swung his fist against Strong's mouth and smashed the lips.

Strong walked slowly toward the back of the tents. There was something deadly and cold about his walk. He stood facing Garrity. A ring of enlisted men gathered about them. Strong's soft drawl came back—the drawl that a year in the Corps had buried to a great extent.

"I ain't aimin' to do no fightin' with nobody," he told Garrity softly. "You-all seem to want to fight. You-all are goin' to get hell beat out of you. I reckon I can half-kill any man who can kill a dawg."

THE Marine Corps talked about that fight for ten years. Two men, half-mad with a brutal campaign, standing toe to toe, slugging for two hours. Both of them dripping with blood, swaying on feet, silent, each trying to kill the other.

Strong, tall, wiry, with terrible stamina. His fists driving like pistons. Short, sharp, jolting smashes to the head and body. Garrity, his head on Strong's chest, punching tirelessly, his face a bloody mask, contorted with rage. Eight times during those two hours, Garrity knocked Strong off his feet by the sheer viciousness of smashes to the jaw . . . knocked him flat. And each time, Strong came erect again, unruffled, unhurried, and went on with the savage business of battering the strength and fight out of Garrity's body.

At the end of two hours Garrity was blind. His eyes were closed. His mouth

MICHAEL GARRITY

was a bloody tear in the center of his face. His nose was flattened. He kept coming in, driven by his bandy legs when he could not lift his arms. And Strong stepped back and smacked him as he came in, merci-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lessly, methodically bent on stopping him. Something like a sob erupted from Garrity's throat. His knees buckled. Strong stepped in. He measured the distance to Garrity's jaw. His fist whipped through the short space. It sounded like a club on a skull. Garrity plunged forward and plowed up the earth at Strong's feet.

Strong looked down at him for a moment. He lifted his head. "He's a right tolerable fighter," he said, as if to himself. He pulled his shredded shirt about his shoulders and mopped the blood off his face. Then he stalked away.

Garrity was unconscious for an entire afternoon.

During the next ten days Garrity challenged four times, and was beaten four times.

At the end of the second week after the Palace episode the black chow puppy died. It merely died. It refused to eat, or to drink or to be friendly. It stood on its little fat legs with its ruff bristling, until weakness caused it to roll over on the floor of Strong's tent. Strong tended it as he might have tended a baby. But the Imperial Chow set an example not followed by the human guardians of the Imperial Throne. It refused to fraternize in any way with the conquerors of Imperial China. It died with a growl in its baby throat and snapping at Strong's hand.

Neither Garrity or Strong ever learned what happened to the treasure chests in the Palace. Garrity sold the few jewels he had snatched from the chest to a Chinese dealer in precious stones, was shamefully cheated, and spent the money staying drunk.

CHAPTER II.

FRANCE AND THE WAR.

THE hectic life of the Corps led them out of China into new scenes and new battles. At the end of every scene it was usually for a weeping woman to stand on the dock and wave good-by to Garrity. He was like that. He took his women by storm as the Marines carried positions by assault.

Both Garrity and Strong automatically re-enlisted at the expiration of every term of enlistment. In those days a man either belonged in the Corps, or he didn't. If he didn't he discovered the fact long before the expiration of his first cruise. In a sense Garrity never belonged to the Corps. He still had a contempt for the tradition of the Service. He was no "sing-song" Marine. Morale, history, esprit de corps meant nothing to him. The Marines were fighting.

Garrity and Strong fought shoulder to shoulder through a dozen campaigns and expeditions. They sprouted ribbons on the left breast of their tunics. They grew toughened and weatherbeaten in the field. But they never spoke to one another after the China fight.

When Strong became a Sergeant, Garrity merely laughed. And Garrity's eyes gleamed with a peculiar devilishness. Strong was made a Sergeant in the tropics. The battalion was in the field. They were at the bottom of a hill which has since become famous in Marine Corps annals. The top of the hill was fortified and held by ten thousand native troops. The Marines numbered in the vicinity of five hundred. In the morning the battalion was going to storm that hill.

FOREIGN military observers had pronounced the operation impossible. A tight mouthed officer of Marines who later won the Congressional Medal twice, offered to bet all takers that "his boys" would storm the heights.

The hill lifted its crown out of a tangled jungle. It was precipitous and nasty looking. When a man was killed his body would roll to the bottom, bouncing on the rocks as it went down.

Garrity looked at Strong's chevrons. "So you're a Sergeant, eh?" he asked sarcastically. "It's getting to be that stripes don't care who wear 'em. Well, in the morning we'll see how far behind Private Garrity, Sergeant Strong will be, when we go over the top of that hill."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The next night Garrity had been recommended for a decoration. He was the first Marine over the trenches at the top of the hill. He went up like a tiger, his bayonet thrust out in front of him and with rifle and Gatling gunfire blazing in his face. Now and then he turned on the way up and laughed in Strong's face as Strong fought to lead his men to the top, and for the honor of being the first to storm into the trenches. Garrity hurled himself into the center of a Gatling gun crew and bayoneted the gunners single handed. He was standing in the center of a ring of bodies when Strong leaped into the trench with what was left of his men, and began the mopping up procedure.

Garrity did more than any Marine or any ten Marines to break the hearts of those natives on the top of the hill. They shot at him with everything that would fire, but he kept coming on, one man, leading all the rest, like a grinning devil. Garrity's name went back to Washington in dispatches that night, and the fame of the United States Marines went round the world in reports from the foreign observers to home governments.

Garrity was made a Sergeant. He was commended before what was left of the battalion, on the field of battle. He stood up in his blood stiffened uniform and with the marks of combat still on his face almost indifferently as he was cited and thanked. Later he told the men.

"They make a lot of excitement over nothin'. Me . . . I was just showin' up that baboon, Strong. He ate my dust all the way up the hill. . ."

Three months later Garrity was "busted" for drunk and disorderly conduct. He cleaned out a certain house in a certain Central American town because they wanted him to pay three pesos for a bottle of beer, and Garrity was not interested at the moment in beer drinking.

In the years that followed, Garrity was made a Sergeant and then busted for cause no less than eight times. Officers who had to handle Garrity merely shook heads at the mention of his name. One of them said: "If Garrity ever decides to join the Marine Corps he'll make the best soldier wearing the uniform." And that was a queer statement considering that when it was made, Garrity had served seventeen consecutive years in the Corps, wore four hitch marks on his sleeve and the ribbon for every expedition and campaign in which the Corps had taken part during those seventeen years. Yet it described Garrity's soldiering better than anything ever said of him.

AND then came France. The Marine Corps found itself embarked upon its greatest adventure. This was a war. This was what they had been waiting for during those years of beating the jungle bush, and those months of sweating and cursing after bandits and coffee-colored "politicos" and black bandits. Out of the shadows of Haiti and Santo Domingo; out of the swamps of the Philippines and the prison island of Guam where men went mad with looking out over the endless Pacific; out of Central America and the far flung line held by the Corps, bronzed men moved along trails with an eager gleam in their eyes and a stirring within chests. Men who had read of a war, as a war should be, raging across the Atlantic and who were eager to match themselves with the picked soldiers of the world.

And Garrity and Strong moved with them. Strong to train, to drill, to teach youngsters who thronged to the Corps at the promise "First to Fight." Garrity, a Sergeant again because of the step up all along the line, drilling a platoon on the same drill field, growling to his men as he marched them under full pack: "If you monkeys ain't better soldiers than them flop-eared guys of Strong's before I get finished with yez, I'll throttle yez with me own hands."

Sweating, straining, molding and shaping young bodies, both Strong and Garrity striving to outdo each other than to embarrass the Kaiser.

And then, before any of them realized what was happening, they were in France.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Men in Marine Corps o.d. lining the rail making book on whether or not a submarine would get them. Unloaded at Havre, marching through the streets of Paris after a ride upon a crazy train, women running beside them, kissing them, showering roses on them, a screaming horde of hysterical people who welcomed each of the Marines as they might have welcomed the coming of a Messiah.

" Training trenches " . . . actually in the line, but in quiet sectors to accustom the men to conditions at the front. Marines . . . training while the structure of Allied resistance trembled and fell into ruins and the Germans, launching a mighty drive, rolled the defending troops before them and scattered them to the winds.

And then, suddenly truck trains moved along the roads. Lorries laden with Marines. And the word ran along the hundreds of trucks. " We're going . . . we're going in . . . we're going to the Front!" And Strong's platoon, and Garrity's platoon, elements of the 16th Company, Fifth Regiment, Fourth Brigade, United States Marines were in those trucks

It was pitch black. The lorries jolted and pounded, shuddered, lunged and creaked. The solid tired wheels fell heavily into holes in the road. The motors ground and groaned, raced and labored. The lorry bodies were crammed beyond capacity with men. The men were standing, crowded together, rifles and equipment gouging each other, flung this way and that, bruised, shaken, and with muscles numbed beyond aching by the torturous ride.

Ahead was complete darkness. To the rear was complete darkness. It seemed to the men that they had been riding through an eternity since the lorries had drawn up in the gray of nightfall and had taken the road . . . to nowhere. They were hungry. Their bellies burned. Their mouths were gritty with the dust swirling about them; dust which powdered uniforms and equipment to a depth of a quarter inch.

After the first hour of the ride an order had gone along the line: " Don't use those canteens . . . don't use your water!" And being Marines, they obeyed. For the first half hour of the ride they had talked eagerly, had sung vociferously and had cursed thunderously, but that was all past. Even when the trucks lurched and iron studded boot soles thudded into shin bones, there was only a grunting. Nerves were on edge, tempers were nasty.

NOW and then shadows passed the trucks; little knots of shadows with white faces thrust out of the necks of uniforms. Broken shadows, streaming by the trucks like white spume sliding by a line of ships at sea. Some of the shadows shouted incoherent words snatched from tight throats. Most of them passed without sound. There was something crushed about the shadows, something which savored of complete abjection, of complete hopelessness, of complete defeat.

For five hours the trucks had been lunging through waves of these shadows. They seemed innumerable, like leaves swept from trees by a heavy autumn gale, fluttering helplessly, moving without aim or direction.

Lieutenant Grey, who commanded Strong's platoon, licked dry lips and said to Strong: " The Frogs are running like rats."

Strong rolled the dust in his mouth into a ball on his tongue and spat over the side of the truck. " Yeah," he nodded. " They're running all right. From the way they look back over their shoulders you'd think the Germans were right on their fannies."

The Lieutenant merely shrugged his shoulders. He turned his head and stared into the darkness in front of his face.

Further back in the lorry train Sergeant Garrity, clinging grimly to the side of a truck, glared at his men in the darkness and spoke gruff words. " We're going up to the Front . . . maybe you guessed it," he told the men with a sarcastic inflection. " Now I want you to get this straight in your heads. There is a war going on . . . the Germans on one side and a bunch of guys named Joe on the other. I don't give a damn what the Joes do. I don't give a damn about the Germans. I don't give a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whoop in hell for the glory of the good old U. S. Marine Corps. But of even one of you muggs so much as lets a man of Strong's platoon get a foot in front of you where we're going, I'll stop in the middle of the action and break his neck.

"Those buzzards of Strong's are all ready to show the way to the war to the rest of the Marine Corps. He's got 'em sold on the idea that they're the best soldiers in Europe. Well . . . you got to be better! This war came along at the right minute. It's going to give me a chance to show some of them Lieutenants that there are other non-coms in this outfit as good as Bill Strong . . . and his name is Garrity . . . get it . . . Garrity!"

The grinding and clashing and jouncing continued. There was a sudden break in the torture. The trucks were crossing a side road. A moving force struck out of the darkness with terrific force. There were screams and shouts and bedlam. The screams were of a nature the men in the trucks had never heard; the screaming of horses in mortal agony. The men piled out of the trucks. They discovered a French battery of .75s, traveling at a dead gallop, had careened out of the side road and had smashed headlong into the truck train. Guns and caissons were piled up. Horses were down. Men were hurt. All in the darkness.

A French officer rode into the mess. He shrieked orders hysterically. He demanded order and that his guns be permitted to pass.

Lieutenant Grey spoke to Strong. "Toss those damned guns into the ditch and let's get out of here."

Strong's platoon piled out into the road and clambered among the guns. Garrity's platoon dropped off the trucks with a whoop. In the darkness, hands seized upon wheel spokes. A squad of Strong's platoon hurled the first French gun into the ditch.

GARRITY'S voice growled above the confusion, barking orders at his men. "Those guys of Strong's are a little weak in the back," he said as he spat on his hands and grabbed for a hand hold on a caisson. "Let's toss this damned thing clear into the next county . . . come on . . . all together . . . heave!"

There was a thud. The caisson was lifted bodily off the road and hurled into a ditch.

"C'mon," snapped Grey. "Shake things up." He whirled, a flashlight beam struck him in the face. "Hey!" He yelled at the flashlight, "Put out that light!"

The light was in the hands of the French Colonel of Artillery. The Colonel's hands were shaking. He seemed on the verge of apoplexy. His eyes stared at the spectacle of his sacred guns being dumped into the ditch by profane hands. He saw another caisson follow another gun into the ditch. He lifted his riding crop. He brought it down like a saber for Grey's head. Garrity's hand caught the Colonel's wrist and snatched the Colonel from his horse. Garrity's foot kicked the flashlight out of the Colonel's hand.

"Don't go hitting at people with dog whips," grated Garrity. "It ain't nice."

The French artillery men started forward. The Marines drew themselves up, grinning, ready. The artillery men paused.

"Come on!" invited Garrity with a whoop. "I've been waiting for four months to cave in a Frog face."

"You're going in the wrong direction to give orders to anybody," Grey snarled at the French Colonel. "The Front is back the other way."

"I demand your name—your organization," screamed the Colonel.

"Sure! I'm Lieutenant Grey. This is the United States Marine Corps."

Grey turned to Strong: "Sergeant, if this mess is cleared up, get the men back in the trucks."

Strong blew his whistle. The men climbed back in the lorries reluctantly. They wanted to toss the French after the guns. They were laughing. Tossing a battery of artillery into a ditch under the eyes of the Commanding Colonel was a delightful and unique occupation. For a moment they had forgotten the bruises.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The trucks moved on. The jolting began anew. The French Colonel and his officer stood at the cross roads and screeched after them.

BILL STRONG

Garrity grinned. "I knew a gal in Vera Cruz with a voice just like that. Boy! Could she sound off. But that Frog, now I don't know. He'd give her a good run for her dough."

Private Dzomba snorted. "Them Frogs all holler like that. Even when they're askin' what time it is they sound like an argument in a coffee klotch."

"Pipe down back there!"

The little Anamite truck drivers clung to the steering wheels of the lorries like so many monkeys. They looked like monkeys. Now and then on the northern horizon a dull red blot seeped into the blackness, existed for a moment and faded out. A red Aurora Borealis, ugly, sinister, the color of running blood.

Now and then a dull booming like far off thunder sounded over the thumping and grinding of the lorries.

Strong spoke into the Lieutenant's ear. "That's the war up there. I got a hunch we won't be in these trucks much longer."

The lorry train came to a groaning halt. From ahead there was the sound of men piling out onto the road, and the voices of platoon leaders giving orders.

"C'mon. Let's get going. Fall in alongside the road by platoons. Get clear of the trucks. C'mon! Snap into it!"

CHAPTER III.

"FIX BAYONETS!"

THE platoons swung into a column of squads. The nail shod boots thudded on the highway in measured cadence. The column swung along, marching strongly. After twenty minutes the road ended. It became nothing more than a succession of shell craters. The craters still breathed the odor of explosives. The men floundered, fought to keep the alignment of a column of squads, breathed heavily.

Private Culloti uttered an unpublishable remark: "Jeez!" he continued. "These Frogs must be awful proud of their lousy country. Up to now I've been on three fronts and I ain't seen a damn thing of France yet. I been over here since the 24th of September, 1917. I done enough marchin' back and forth to cover the whole of France nine times . . . and I ain't even seen as much as a French cow! All night work. But can I tell anybody I been there? I can like hell. I been through 'em all at night, marchin' like this into some lousy trainin' trench and then marchin' out again. I ain't as much as sent anybody a post card. Join the Marine Corps and see the world . . . that's a swell assortment of horse-collar!"

Private Martin squirmed his pack straps into a more comfortable position and spoke out the side of his mouth. "Where we're goin' you won't have no trouble sending souvenirs home. Only I got a hunch you'll have to write 'em on asbestos."

The darkness grew deeper. The column was swinging along a by-road through the midst of thick trees. The tiny sound of metal against metal sounded amid the thud of marching feet. The uniforms of the men were soaking wet under the armpits

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and down the middle of the back. The smell of sweat and leather was beginning to hang over the column.

Uniform cloth was beginning to rub flesh raw. But the column seemed lubricated by its own sweat. It ate up distances in smooth stride.

There was an air of tension marching with the men. A feeling that they were racing to arrive at a fixed point before an adversary. The rumble out of the north grew louder. Now and then the staccato sound of machine gun fire drifted on the breeze accompanied by the odor of burning wood. Now and then a battery of .75's would break out into hysterical firing from somewhere ahead. After five or ten minutes the .75's would be silenced. But the red flame from gun muzzles would smear the blackness of the night . . . red and yellow and orange . . . until it flickered and died out of the sky.

Somebody called out in a husky voice. "Where in hell are we, Sergeant?"

Garrity was scratching his head with both hands. "I dunno. I been kind of checkin' up on the map. S'far as I can tell we're on the Paris Road, near some joint called Château-Thierry."

"Now ain't that nice?" asked a sarcastic voice. "Just think of being able to tell your grandchildren that you was on the *road* to Paris! Who in the hell ever heard of this Thierry place anyhow?"

That night the platoons slept in the grass beside the road. Sergeant Strong did not sleep. In the darkness he was a giant. His long legs moved soundlessly. The men of the platoon were flung out over the ground. Some of them lay with faces turned up to the moonlight. Some of them lay with faces pressed to the earth. Strong looked down on each man, studied his face, his uniform and his equipment. He looked at them as God might have looked upon putty He had taken into His hands and fashioned into living men.

For these Marines, sleeping beside the Paris Road, had been given to Strong as so much putty, and by working with them and moulding them, he had transformed them into toughened, tireless, grim, fighting machines.

HE knew all of them . . . knew their names, their histories. There was Private Martin, sleeping with his right hand grasping his rifle. Some mother was looking for Private Martin. Martin had lied about his age when he enlisted. He wasn't a day over sixteen. He was forty pounds heavier now and as husky as a stevedore. Well, the Marine Corps did that for a boy.

Other men there, faces weatherbeaten. Men Strong had known in China. Old soldiers, seasoning the platoon. Dzomba, Culloti, who had marched jungle trails and had burned powder in a dozen campaigns.

Faces parading through Strong's brain. His own voice sounding in his ears. His own voice and his own hands, moulding and shaping the putty into Marines.

And now the platoon was here, across the Paris Road. Eighty-eight of them, with flanks up in the air and the whole German Army in front of them. Sleeping, while the roads to the rear were choked with other troops all running away from the same enemy.

At four o'clock a runner came up. Strong awoke Lieutenant Grey. "The order is to take position across the road . . . and to hold," he told the Lieutenant.

Grey came to his feet, awake and alert. "Let's go."

They went along the line of sleeping men and kicked on boot soles. Strong's voice, hardly more than a whisper, crackled against the ears of the men.

"C'mon. Get up out of there. Get moving. Pick up those packs and hike."

The men came up, grumbling and yawning, climbed to feet, stood swaying, fighting off sleep, probed for pack straps with numbed arms, grabbed rifles.

A shriek split the stillness overhead. The shrieking ferocity of a ravening ghost. Eardrums were suddenly split. The concussion beat down upon the men. There was a stench of high explosives and the whirr and buzz of shrapnel fragments. The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

platoon flattened itself, faces down, against the earth and remained without moving.

There was a second shriek and a third. Great smears of flame tore the curtain of early morning to shreds. Showers of earth and geysers of blasted macadam fell on them and bounced off tin hats.

Strong stood erect, his back to a tree and watched his platoon. He was seeing them under fire for the first time. The baptism of flame flooded over them. A tightness grew up in his throat and an empty feeling sucked in the walls of his stomach.

He heard Garrity's voice in the midst of the racket. "Them guns remind me of the Chinks . . . them Boxers. A lot of damn noise and nobody hurt. Listen to 'em. Ain't it pretty? They can play tunes with them .77s. Get down or I'll bust your head with this rifle butt. Stay down. . ."

Private Martin laughed. There was a little hysterical note in the laughter, but it was laughter.

There was a spurting flame on the right of Strong's platoon. A tree staggered and splinters flew over the men. There was a groan and a gurgle. A voice yelled: "First aid . . . here!"

Strong wiped something red and sticky from his face with his sleeve. He lunged forward. A cold ferocity churned within him. He stumbled over writhing flesh under his feet. He felt about with his hands.

"Martin!"

His hands had touched dead men before. He knew the feel of lax muscles. He knew Martin was dead. The poor kid . . . the poor kid . . . who wanted to send a German helmet home to his mother. . .

He heard Garrity's voice, laughing raucously. "Get a load of that, lads! Strong's tourists just entered the war zone!" There was a hooting wave of laughter from Garrity's platoon. Strong's body was crawling. He was thinking of Martin . . .

THE two platoons dug shallow rifle pits cross the road to protect themselves against machine gun and rifle fire . . . just deep enough for prone bodies to be level with the surface of the earth. The shells still screeched and ripped over them. Little by little the darkness gave way to the gray of dawn. The trunks of the trees became visible. Then the ditches at the roadside. Finally they could see a hundred yards ahead.

A voice snarled from a rifle pit: "Here they come!"

There was a gray mist moving between the trees, coming on steadily, slipping in and out between the tree trunks. The mist dissolved itself into individual moving figures crowned with awkward looking coal bucket helmets. The indistinct blurs grew faces and hands. The shelling died away suddenly. It became deathly quiet.

Lieutenant Grey slipped his whistle between his teeth. He grinned at Strong, a queer, white grin. "Well, we'll see how many of those expert riflemen you're so goddamed proud of can really shoot, or whether, as Garrity says, they got their medals for ball room dancing." He took a breath. His pistol was clutched in his right hand. He noticed that Strong was not using his pistol. Strong had a rifle with a fixed bayonet . . . Martin's rifle.

The gray wave broke into an ambling trot across a little clearing in front of the two platoons. Eyes and noses and mouths appeared in the faces under the coal bucket helmets.

There was a single shrill blast from Grey's whistle. A searing flame leaped from the front of the platoons. It stabbed out of the rifle pits. Machine guns opened from the right and left of each platoon. They chattered viciously.

The front rank of the field-gray wave spun about drunkenly or plunged face first to earth. Gray arms and legs writhed and twisted. Running men seemed to plunge against an invisible barrier, crush heads against it, to fall heavily. Fifty feet in front of the platoon knots of gray dead were piling up like scum on a moving stream caught by some obstruction. Then there was a sudden break in the onrush of the gray wave. It receded like an ebb tide—disappeared into the covering fringe

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the woods. The clearing was choked with the dead.

Lieutenant Grey's whistle blew. He gave the order: "Cease firing."

Strong walked along the line of rifle pits. He looked at each man. There was a brightness in his gray-blue eyes. A slug whined over his head, buried itself in the trunk of a tree. He sauntered back to the Lieutenant. "All there," he said with a little rasp in his voice. "Nobody got it. God . . . did they pile 'em up. What do you think about the experts in this platoon? Did it look like ball room dancing? God! Those squareheads must have lost five hundred men out there."

"They'll come on again in a minute," prophesied Grey.

And for the second time that line of rifle pits, one man deep, rolled back the gray wave. And a third time. And a fourth.

THE fourth assault was the most vicious. The rifle pits were pounded for twenty minutes by the German field guns in the vicinity. A real box barrage which threw up walls of flame about the platoons. Through the open end of the box came the German assault. The wave attempted to roll over the pits by sheer weight and strength of numbers. The box barrage stopped as the German troops came into the clearing.

After ten minutes there were gray uniforms inside that fifty foot deadline. A ragged raging line, faces twisted, coming on, into the face of the hell fire which killed them in droves. Coming on, stumbling, panting, glassy-eyed.

Grey's whistle sounded. His voice barked an order. "Up . . . and at 'em . . . CHARGE!"

Strong was five feet ahead of his men. His powerful arms surged back and forth, the blade of his bayonet ripped wickedly. He heard a voice! Garrity's voice! Yelling at his men.

"Come on, you lily fingered baboons! Come on! Grunt when you drive those bayonets home . . . and TWIST! Make believe you mean it!"

Garrity was fighting to get to Strong's side. He drove the butt of his rifle through a face below a coal bucket helmet. Then he was shoulder to shoulder with Strong.

He was talking out of the side of his mouth and his bayonet was punctuating his words.

"There ain't no Generals out here to see you being a hero," he mocked Strong. "You're wasting your time. If you want a medal you'll have to put on a private show for the Brass Hats . . . you ridge-running hill billy!"

Then the two of them were standing there, hands bloody and tunics smeared. There was an ugly dent in Strong's helmet and the tin hat was pushed over on the side of his head. There was a ring of bayoneted bodies around them. The platoons, still crouching, still with rifles clutched tightly and with smouldering eyes and bared teeth, held the clearing.

"You'll never make a good hand with the bayonet if you live to be a hundred," Strong said coldly. "You were sticking them squareheads a foot deep."

Garrity spat largely and was openly contemptuous. "Listen, Sir Percy," he told Strong. "When I stick 'em, they stay stuck. And you go on making monkeys out of your own silly lookin' platoon. I'll teach my guys how to use a bayonet."

An enemy machine gun stuttered from a new point. Olive green Marine uniforms leaped and twisted, fell to earth. The platoons threw themselves flat and crawled back to the rifle pits.

Strong dragged Lieutenant Grey back with him. There was a powder burn on Grey's tunic and a great smear of blood. His eyes were bulging and his jaw hung open. His hand still clutched his empty pistol.

After he propped Grey against a tree, sheltered from fire, Strong became the platoon leader. He was the senior non-commissioned officer present.

With darkness a runner came up, and a rationing detail. The platoons received orders and food. There bearers were enthusiastic.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We stopped 'em cold!" they declared jubilantly. "One battalion! Cripes—nobody knows where we are or what's on our flanks. I heard 'em talking back there—the Major and some other officers—tomorrow we're going to do a little attackin' on our own."

"Where in the hell do you guys get that 'we' stuff?" demanded Garrity.

"Attack what and with what?" asked a corporal.

"Them woods . . . 'Belleau Woods,' they call 'em," came the indignant answer, "and with what we've got . . ."

"You guys in the rear sure mention that word 'we' easy," growled Garrity a second time. "How many squareheads did you stick? You talk like that mug, Strong."

CORPORAL BUCKWALTER sniffed the air. Short months before Corporal Buckwalter had left a Nebraska farm to enlist in the Marine Corps.

"Growin' wheat!" he whispered awefully. "I'd know the smell anywhere. Jeez! A wheatfield . . . in the middle of this!"

During the night the two platoons had crossed the clearing filled with enemy dead and had prowled forward through the woods like Indians on a war trail. The men were stripped to fighting gear. Rifles, web belts, bayonets and scabbards, tin hats, canteens, first aid pouches and iron rations. The packs had been abandoned at the edge of the woods.

"Extend!" barked Strong. "Open up. Get more space between men. And when we walk out of here I'll brain the first man that bunches toward another guy. I want open order . . . *wide open!*"

A white moon was making a brief arc across the heavens. It was sinking out of sight.

Private Dzomba, standing at Strong's elbow, sighed. "Ain't that pretty? Many's the time I seen a moon like that over the China Sea. For all I know it may be the same moon. It looks just like it. Gee! Standin' out there—at night—breathin' them funny smells of China and lookin' at the moon bringin' the sails of them crazy Chinese junks up in black silhouette against the water—"

"Hell!" sniffed Garrity. "You ought to see a Caribbean moon. That's a moon!"

"Says you! The China moon is bigger, and its kinda yella—like gold."

A runner darted through the woods. "The signal will be a red rocket," he said breathlessly. "Christ! You guys are sure at the end of the world." He stopped suddenly and glanced out over the wheat field. A little whistle broke from his mouth. "Jeez!" he said slowly. "You guys are sure fixed up swell. Them woods—across that field—are lousy with Germans—and machine guns."

Strong glanced at his wrist watch. He passed the word along the line. "Fix bayonets!"

The clicking sound of the blades snapping onto lugs ran along in the darkness as the word was passed.

A red stain spread over the sky. A stain vomited out of a bursting rocket.

Strong's whistle shrilled. He stepped out of the fringe of trees. Dzomba and Buckwalter stepped with him. They were crouching, like men breasting a heavy wind. A crackling, snapping sound surrounded them.

Dzomba grabbed at his stomach with his hands. His knees buckled under him. His face plowed up the ground.

The platoons drove on a dozen steps. The chattering of machine guns filled the universe. The enemy gunners traversed patiently. The guns were like sewing machines stitching with infinite care a square mile of green material.

No one knew how they crossed that open space, through the young wheat, but somehow they did. They surged up from the ground in the last half dozen steps and hurled themselves into the woods. The machine guns were in there. The Marine bayonets lunged. The men of the platoons, a skeleton company now, were cursing, growling in their throats. Their eyes flamed and the muscles of their bodies seemed swollen to the point of bursting.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The woods seemed endless. A runner reached them. "Dig in and hold." They dug.

When night fell again it grew quiet. They took a few precious sips of water from canteens. It was hot and flat—but it was water.

Strong called the roll. There were twenty-seven men left out of his platoon of eighty-eight. There were no non-commissioned officers but himself.

LATER Strong crawled through the trees locating his men. Someone cursed him savagely. The someone was Garrity. Garrity was down. His face was bloody. There was a black welt beside his jaw. A man was working on him. Strong stood over them. A devil moved Strong.

"Oh!" he said, simulating great surprise. "The *fighting* Sergeant Garrity! Well, well—I knew all the while you had no stomach for this business, but I never thought I'd see a Marine Sergeant flopping around, moaning—trying to beat his way to the rear—and with an s.i.f.—a self-inflicted wound!"

Garrity's body launched itself upward. It fell back on the grass. Garrity's face became white with pain.

"Why—you crummy!" he yelped at Strong. "The only thing that saves you from getting your lousy mouth busted is the fact that I can't stand up—for the minute. I'll make you eat that!"

"How many men have you fit for duty?" asked Strong.

"None of your damned business. I'm running this platoon. You run your own."

"This is in the line of duty, Sergeant," informed Strong sweetly. "I'm the senior non-commissioned officer present, unfortunately."

"Twenty-three, then, damn you," snarled Garrity. "And I'm the only non-com."

"You mean you're the only guy wearing stripes," corrected Strong in the same sweet tone. "You're a hell of a looking platoon leader. Look, lad," he told the man working over Garrity. "Don't you think you could make him more comfortable with a pillow and a hot water bottle?"

Garrity's body shook with a spasm. He got up on his hands and knees and tried to crawl toward Strong. "I'll kill you—

LIEUTENANT GREY

you mangy baboon! I'll tramp on your goddamed face!"

"Careful, Sergeant," warned Strong with mock solicitude. "You simply must think of your health. I certainly wouldn't want to see anything happen to Battling Garrity, the Pride of the Porto Rico honkey-tonks." So Strong came to command two platoons, and to have Garrity serving under him.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTURED!

THEY lost track of time and space in the period following. They fought a way through the woods. Death worked a curious miracle on them. The fewer living, the harder they were to kill. They were like abandoned mortals prowling through a rocketing hell. They moved forward inexorably. They bled, cursed, stumbled, and from somewhere they recruited new strength to move shattered bodies and fatigue poisoned muscles.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They took their first prisoners. In an open space in the woods they burst upon the wreckage of a once great building. It was riven by shell fire and flame. The brick walls were tumbled down, the roof caved in.

A machine gun broke into a rivet hammer banging as they came out of the woods. The gun was cunningly placed within the brick shelter of the building to command the entire clearing. The platoons took shelter. Steel slugs lashed at them and thudded into the trees behind them.

Strong studied the situation while Garrity leaned against a tree, wan, gaunt, and sarcastic. "Keep 'em busy!" he ordered Garrity. He crawled along the fringe of the woods, off to the left of the building. He had no idea what might be beyond the building. He knew one thing—the gun must be silenced, it was holding up the advance. After half an hour he made a half-circle which brought him around to the rear of the building. He was under the walls. He lifted himself slowly. The interior of the building was filled with shadows. He saw the backs of the machine gun crew. It was firing in short bursts.

Strong found an opening in the broken walls. There was a grenade in each of his hands with the pin pulled. He stepped swiftly and softly into the building. His foot scraped on the concrete floor. One of the gunners whirled, his Lüger jerking up.

Strong counted: "One . . . two . . ." He threw the grenade in his right hand and hurled himself to the floor. The Lüger cracked and a slug chipped dust from the bricks over his head. The little grenade, like a black, iron egg, hit the concrete under the feet of the machine gun crew and bounced. In the middle of the bounce, chest high, it exploded. There was a smear of red moisture and shreds of field-gray uniforms driven against the wall. The gun was tumbled over on its muzzle.

Strong stood erect. He looked about him. There was no doubt about this position. It was a German "strong point." The enemy had expected to hold this position to the bitter end, and then, to have men concealed here to shoot an attacking wave in the back when the wave passed over the position.

He sensed the presence of danger—of death. He moved like a cat. His eyes discovered a trap door in the concrete floor. He knew, before he touched the ring bolt to lift the door, that there were men in that cellar—enemy machine gunners—left to relieve and replace this position. He lifted the trap door very carefully. He took his Colt in his right hand. The grenade with the pulled pin was still in his left hand.

The space under his feet was black. He probed with his foot. He found wooden steps. He descended one step. Cold sweat suddenly broke out over his body. He went down another step. He was moving into the blackness under his feet. He sat down on a short landing. He heard his voice speaking, hoarse, brittle. "Below there!"

He was aware that he was a perfect target from below, with his body outlined against the light coming down through the trap door. He waited for the darkness to be split asunder by shots.

"If anybody down there speaks English," he heard himself saying, "I just want to tell him that I'm sitting here with a live grenade in my hand. You might as well come out. The war is over. When I count three I'm going to toss the grenade down the cellar . . . ONE . . ."

There was a half-sobbing, half-choking voice crying at him out of the darkness. "Do not the grenade throw, we will out come . . ."

"Toss your weapons in the floor, and come out . . . one at a time," directed Strong. "I'm going to stand on top of the steps, and the first bad move . . . this grenade goes down the hole. March!"

He heard a rattling of metal and the thud of dropped weapons.

THEN there were slow footsteps on the wooden stairs. He backed carefully to the top of the steps and onto the concrete floor. After a moment a head,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a shoulder came into view from the cellar. A head . . . with an officer's cap, and a tunic with an officer's insignia.

"A Major! A German Major! Marching up the steps, his face gray—white and stiff, and his eyes hard.

Strong gestured with the muzzle of his pistol. "Over there, Major—and keep your hands up! Over there, where I can see you!"

"*Mein Gott!*" exploded the Major. "You alone are?"

"I'm alone are," assured Strong tensely. "Who the hell did you expect, General LeJeune and his Staff?"

Other feet trod the steps to the light of day. A Captain and two Lieutenants came out—and forty-three enlisted men. Strong stood staring at them when they were all lined up against the wall. Then he laughed. His body shook. He was still laughing when Garrity led the men across the clearing into the ex-machine gun nest.

Garrity cursed. "Ain't it a shame?" he growled. "Not a damn General here to see it! As a hero you're sure a bust! But don't feel too proud—hell, a Boy Scout could capture a regiment of these guys. All you have to do is show 'em the way to the rear." He turned suddenly on the German Major, his face red with wrath. "Are you trying to make a monkey of out *me?*" he demanded hotly. "I have a good notion to bust you one on the jaw. The Prussian Guard—and an egg like this Strong mug can take forty-seven of you! Ain't you got no pride?"

They sent the prisoners to the rear guarded by one seventeen-year-old private. The private wept and very nearly mutinied over the duty. He didn't want to be "bothered with no damned prisoners."

From the great Throne Room in the Forbidden City to a woodpile in Belleau Wood represents an eternity of time and an eon of space. An abyss as wide and as deep as the feud between Garrity and Strong.

Strong knew there was something wrong about those woodpiles the moment he saw them. The wood was cut carefully to a size and piled in geometrically perfect rows. Too perfect. And the forest around was too quiet, while the battle raged to the right and left of them.

He halted the platoon at the edge of the swath cut through the trees by the enemy wood gatherers. His forehead was wrinkled. There was a calculating light in his eyes.

Garrity sniffed. "He scents a plot!" he told the surrounding atmosphere. "The Sherlock Holmes of the Marine Corps thinks that something is stinking up the place. Come on . . . let's get the hell out of here . . . the guys we want is in them trees ahead, this ain't no time to stop for heavy brainwork."

Strong stared at him in silent contempt. Then his eyes went back to the wood. He noticed that the stuff was piled all one way. East and west.

Garrity said: "Well . . . let's go, Big Shot!" There was an ugly edge to his voice.

Strong grabbed Garrity's wrist like a flash. "Not that way!" he exploded. "It don't look right. That cord wood . . . all piled one way, making such a beautiful cover. There's something cockeyed about it . . ."

He stopped short. The sentence bogged down in his throat. There was a movement of gray uniforms from ahead. A swarm of enemy infantry came out of the woods. The rifles of the platoon went up. Then they saw that the enemy was coming out with his hands lifted. A whole company, trying to surrender to the fragment of two platoons.

"Well, I'll be damned!" said Garrity. He spat on his hands.

"Don't move!" ordered Strong.

"Don't move, hell!" snapped Garrity. "Maybe you think you're going to beat me to that gang, like you beat me to that last gob of prisoners . . . leave me here . . . and go out and take another regiment single handed. Not by a damned sight! This is my turn at the bat . . . and I'm going to make that measly bunch of scrubs you took look like hell." He turned to what was left of his own platoon.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Come on, boys," he growled. "Let's go get them squareheads."

He broke away from Strong. His men followed him. They went forward at a run, rifles down, bayonets gleaming. Strong swallowed hard. He shouted once after Garrity. Then he whirled to the one machine gun left to them. "If those squareheads fire one shot, mow 'em down!" he grated in the gunner's ear. The gunner grunted and squinted through the sights.

In the open space between the trees Garrity was ahead of his men . . . ahead of the dozen who followed him. They were in front of the piled up cord wood, now. The enemy was standing with hands lifted. Strong and his dozen watched from the woods. The disarmed enemy was not more than fifty feet from Garrity.

Suddenly the lifted hands of the enemy moved. They moved forward with a rush. Strong's voice split in his throat, "Grenades!" he shrieked.

Dozens of the things were hurtling toward the remnant of Garrity's platoon. The men fell down on their faces behind the wood piles.

They hugged the ground. The grenades thudded and burst around them.

The machine gun in front of Strong's face went into deadly action. The front rank of the enemy went down, swept away as the machine gun traversed the clearing. The grenades were blasting the wood piles to splinters. Flame splattered from the earth.

And the enemy rushed back into the woods. A storm of machine gun fire came out of the trees. It was not aimed at the Marines with Garrity, but at the wood piles. The slugs went through the openings between the piled up pieces of cord wood. It was like firing through tissue paper, because the end of the sticks were on line with the machine gun fire.

The space behind the piles of wood became a shambles. There was nothing Garrity's men could do about it. They were murdered. Garrity watched them die . . . all of them.

Something within him seemed to go berserk. He came up on his feet. His eyes were staring. His hands were knotted into hard fists.

He walked toward those enemy guns, his mouth twisted, his body taut, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, dripping off his chin.

Strong heard his own voice shouting suddenly, "We can't let him go like that! Come on!"

He was plunging headlong through the woods. Beside him a boy went down and got up. The boy ran on. There was a spurting torrent of blood from the boy's arm. Strong knocked him down, whipped a tourniquet about the stump of an arm. The rest was shot away.

"S'funny!" the boy said through white lips. "I didn't feel nothin'."

"Stay put!" ordered Strong.

The sudden horror of being left alone, abandoned, flooded into the boy's eyes. He scrambled to his feet. "Stay, hell!" he screamed.

He ran on . . . his stump flopping, his feet and legs staggering.

A mere handful of them, but they swept the woods. Gun butts thudding against enemy faces . . . bayonets flicking evilly, grenades smearing the world with a red glare, machine guns stuttering savagely.

Once Strong had a glimpse of a bloody faced fury hooking the stump of a left arm over the barrel of a machine gun. The fury had thrown himself headlong over the muzzle of the gun while it was in action. The right hand of the fury lifted and fell, driving a trench knife into the body of the gunner.

When it was over it was like the breaking away of insane clouds from in front of the light, and five Marines held the woods.

Strong staggered out into the clearing in which the wood piles had been erected. He found Garrity. Garrity was lying on his face. There were bubbles of blood seeping out of the corner of his mouth. Strong knelt beside him. He turned Garrity over, and went to work. There was a rip in Garrity's shoulder, and his helmet had been knocked flat by a slug. After a long while

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Garrity opened his eyes. He saw Strong's face, looking down at him.

"The damned hero!" growled Garrity, between gasps. "The damned hero rescues the no-good baboon." He had trouble breathing.

His hand made a movement. It grabbed hold of Strong's arm. There was something of infinite grief in Garrity's eyes. "Something went wrong . . . with me . . . when I saw them kids go down . . . them lousy machine guns killing 'em. I knew I loved every mother's son there . . . and they were dying. I had to get my hands on them machine gunnin'—I had to . . ."

"Lay still," snapped Strong.

"Still, hell!" Garrity's voice was broken, husky. "Them damn wood piles! I shoulda listened . . . I oughta known you was right . . . I killed them boys . . . !"

"Aw, hell, Mickey!" said Strong gruffly. "How could you tell? Anybody would have fallen for that surrender stuff." It was the first time in twenty years that Strong had called Garrity by his first name. The "Mickey" came almost softly from his bloated lips.

Garrity's hand held tighter. He swallowed hard. "Bill," he croaked. "Listen . . . a lot of times I wanted . . . to tell you . . . but I didn't have the goddamed guts of a baby."

"Tell me what . . . Mickey?" growled Strong.

"Tell you I oughtn't to have killed that damned Chinese dog . . . he was only doin' what he was born to do . . ."

Later Marine uniforms came up in the gloom of night. They found five survivors of two full platoons. The new uniforms were the "relief." They watched Strong carrying Garrity back to the rear. Garrity was fighting to stay on his feet, to walk. Strong was half dragging him. There was one white-faced kid among the five who was striding along, his clothes rags, his body twisted, looking straight ahead of him with staring eyes, his mouth wide open, and the kid was singing at the top of a cracked crazy voice: *"From the Halls of Montezuma . . . to the Shores of Tripoli . . . we will fight our country's battles . . . on the land and on the sea . . ."*

Strong's croaking voice sounded: "Shut up that singing, you crazy fool . . ."

And Garrity's suddenly belligerent voice, barking at Strong. "Let him sing, damn you! It ain't no skin off you is it! He can sing if he wants to . . . he's a Marine . . . ain't he?"

THE END

Oriental Ring Champs

WRESTLERS in Japan go through formalities which would startle an American audience, but they sometimes get thrown just as badly as ours. After their names have been called they strut to the ring, fill their mouths with water and blow it out in a mist so that it falls all over them. This is not just for fun, but is supposed to purify their bodies if they get killed. They scatter a little salt, too. After each has stepped to the center of the ring to exhibit himself, and they have gone through a ritual involving stamps and handclaps—not till then—they are ready to do battle.

At a signal they leap and wrap arms. The idea is to touch any part of your opponent's anatomy to the floor, except his soles, or to shove him out of the ring. Actually they try to grab hold of each other's belts. After some minutes of crushing, in which an occasional rib is cracked, one usually manages to grab the other's belt, lift the 250-pounder over his head and chuck him out of the ring. This counts as winning.

Delos White.

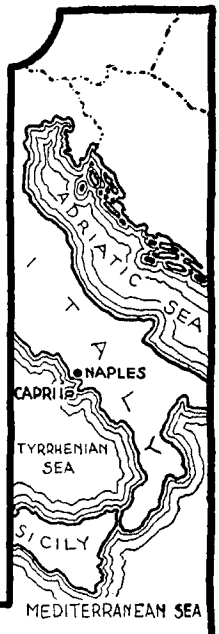
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wonders of the World

ONE of the most curious facts about the famous Blue Grotto on the island of Capri, only twenty miles from Naples, is that this cavern was known to the people of ancient Rome, and then lost, not to be rediscovered until the early nineteenth century.

This enchanted cave, with its small entrance scarcely three feet high, has been carved out by the Mediterranean from strata of Appenine limestone. Once you have entered by boat, you find that everything is blue inside, blue of every delicate tint and shade, melting and mingling into one another, as a result of the reflection of light which filters through the small cavern mouth. The movement of the waves causes this light to be in a constant state of motion, like the movement on the screen of a huge color organ. The beauty of these shifting lights is beyond description.

"AN ENCHANTED CAVE IN VARYING SHADES OF BLUE"



The BLUE GROTTO, Capri.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jungle Guillotine

By TOM CURRY

Author of "Death Game," "The Sacred Sword," etc.

Novelette

CHAPTER I.

MORTAL ENEMIES.

SUBDUED excitement seized every convict in the French Guianan prison barrack as Commandant Riche opened the clanging iron gate and swung into the long room. From the men on the canvas cots came only silence, but it was eloquent. Each asked himself quickly, "What has happened that Riche should come here now, to this pigpen as he calls it? Has there been an escape; has some stool pigeon lied, perhaps said guns were in the prison; another murder—?"

Riche was tall with thick body, and his brown mustache proudly tipped. He enjoyed the apprehension his sudden appearance created, showed it by coldly staring them up and down, not speaking for moments. Then, white uniform stiffly starched, tropical helmet set straight on his Gallic head, he raised a hand, pointing at Hanson, the blond American giant.

"You!" Riche said. "Stand up." It was an order, sharp, abrupt.

Most men go to Devil's Island because they can't help it—one went there for revenge

Riche groveled in the dirt, begging for mercy

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hanson heaved his great bulk from the canvas strip where he sat beside Etienne, the small, wiry Parisian apache. Shaggy, bleached yellow hair covered the American's head; the skin of his face, tanned by the equatorial sun, was smooth as a child's, while his wide eyes, very light blue, were like that same child's save there was a sadness in the depths youth does not know. There was tranquillity, serenity about the giant, whose hands were as large as plates, shoulders broad as two ordinary men. He stood six-feet-three, weighed over two hundred pounds. He was the sort of man his fellows take pride in, a handsome, huge animal women blindly loved.

"And you, iittle gutter rat," added Riche, indexing Etienne.

Etienne's eyes narrowed; he leaped to his feet, inches under his comrade, easily able to hide himself entirely behind Hanson. He whispered a French oath that perfectly described Commandant Riche. Compared with the spacious movements of Hanson, Etienne was a flea.

Swiftly then, Commandant Riche pointed to eight more men among the eighty in that dormitory. All, with the exception of Etienne, were strong and large, not yet withered by fever, bad food, the murderous climate of Guiana. "Pack your knapsacks and fall in at the gate," commanded Riche. "The *surveillant* will bring you there in ten minutes." He about-faced in military fashion, and the gate rang metallically after him.

At once a buzz of conjecture arose. "He has some dirty work to be done," growled Etienne, "for he's picked all the husky ones."

"Like you, *hein?*" joked a tattooed *zéphyr*.

Hanson set about packing his few rags and belongings from the shelf above his cot, binding them in a canvas bag.

"Maybe Riche has picked out his best pals for a pleasure jaunt," another said.

"Huh, Riche knows I hate him," cried Etienne. He drew a home-made knife from the folds of his shapeless gray uniform with black prison numerals across it. "I was just telling Hanson what I'd like to do with Riche." His white teeth showed as he twirled the blade with twisting motion upward, as though he cut into the belly of the commandant. "Thrust, in and up, then turn it around so it tears his yellow guts," he shouted. "Oh, these lousy guards! They cheat us, insult us, kill us—and nothing is done. You great big hulks won't fight. Why don't we all mutiny, turn on them like the beasts they make us? If I could only get my hands on a machine gun! *Mon Dieu,* but those Thompsons are pretty, sweet. I used one in Paris; I could cut a dozen men down before one could shoot a pistol." He turned to Hanson. "Funny, American, Riche never bothers you. He's always picking on me, and on the others to some extent, but he lets you alone. I've never seen him hit you."

Hanson nodded. "Because I don't let him see he annoys me. He can always get a rise out of you, Etienne, and that gives him pleasure."

"Maybe. But I can't help snarling at him."

THE *surveillant* called them, led them through the corridor into the baking courtyard within the high walls of St. Laurent penitentiary. There were other barracks, a hospital, quarters for officers and for soldiers. When they reached the gates leading to the outer world—they had been locked in for the three hours of intense noon heat—they found thirty more prisoners from other dormitories ahead of them. Every one, save Etienne, was strong and large, the pick of the prison.

They were staring at one another with wondering eyes, lipless whispers of curiosity running up and down the ranks, when the black door of Riche's quarters opened and a small figure in whites and helmet stepped out, Riche close at his heels, smiling—the commandant had opened the door to let the slight, twisted man precede him, an action which astounded the convicts he bullied.

"Big shot," Etienne whispered to Hanson.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hanson turned his eyes to the personage on whom Riche was fawning. An icy hand touched him. A shadow, a shadow of life that was past for him, clouded the clearness of his light eyes. But he did not move.

"I've chosen the most powerful brutes in the prison, M'sieu le Baron," Riche was saying, sweeping his hand up and down the lines, as though he exhibited animals.

And Hanson was asking himself, "Why has my deadly enemy come to Guiana? What does Marcel Lavine expect now?"

Baron Lavine limped down the rows of *bagnards,* each holding his scanty pack. He was bent out of the perpendicular to the right, as though his skin had shrunk; actually it was a spinal injury which had warped his body. He was pale, with sunken cheeks, and the white drill clothing hung loosely on his tiny frame. His head was too large for his body, covered with stringy black hair. But his remarkable eyes, ebony, so black the color was flat, were what set him apart; it was not the pain-racked lines about the large ugly mouth but the horrible expression of suffering in the eyes. They frightened, with their hopeless despair, made men silent since they felt the uselessness of pity, help. Such a look as comes to men condemned to die a painful death from disease, or by the law for a crime.

Lavine paused beside Hanson, looked up into the giant's calm face.

The baron's breathing grew faster, he began to shake as he stared at the serene mass before him.

"Damn you, Hanson," he cried. "Won't anything change you, disturb you—murderer!" He turned away as though unable to stand the sight of Hanson, and his glittering eyes fell on Etienne. "Riche," he snapped. "What's the idea of taking along a shrimp like this one? He can't carry a load."

"M'sieu le Baron," Riche said humbly, "I'm taking him—as my valet. You comprehend? I must have some pleasure, and this little rat amuses me. Is it all right?"

Lavine shrugged, grunted assent. "Riche," he ordered, "bring Hanson inside, to your room." They could see he was trembling as he went back through the black door.

Riche shoved Hanson, not missing a chance to kick at Etienne, who snarled, showing his teeth. The commandant threw back his head and laughed, but pushed Hanson along a dark passage into a square room. Lavine awaited Hanson, impatiently pacing up and down. When the American stood inside, Riche, who was curious about Lavine's interest in Hanson, wished to remain and listen, but Lavine waved him angrily away. "Outside! Shut the door and don't listen at it, Riche." Riche hopped out at once. And Lavine swung fiercely on Hanson.

"WHY did you kill her?" Lavine gasped. This great man, internationalist, worth millions, with projects embracing the world, was more interested in a broken convict than in anything else.

"I've told you again and again I didn't kill Adele," said Hanson, quite calm now, controlling the shock felt at seeing Lavine.

His serenity enraged the baron. "You did. You shot her, the only woman I ever loved. And she loved me!"

Hanson shook his head. "She chose to marry me, Lavine."

"But why? I had millions, could have given her anything. Why did she choose you, a great, stupid oaf, a pauper? You have no feelings, you don't suffer as I do—why don't you? Will nothing make you see the enormity of your crime?" Bursting with fury, Lavine hit Hanson, bruising his fist on Hanson's teeth as he drove it to the American's mouth.

Hanson lowered his head; then shook it, did not raise the hands that might have crushed the twisted man before him. No hate showed in his eyes. "Adele was sorry for you," he said gently. "I am, too. I didn't shoot her."

"The court convicted you, however. The concierge of the hovel in which you lived, to which Adele chose to go instead of to my palace, swore you quarreled with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her, that he heard the shot after you got home that night."

"He was mistaken. You know my story."

"Yes—a lie. You killed her! Life in Guiana—you were lucky they didn't cut off your head. I can't forget Adele, her gentleness; I see her eyes always. I've come here for more than one reason, Hanson. You're going into the jungle with me, going to carry in—machinery for mining gold. There's a new strike near the Brazilian border. And I mean to see you suffer physically. Mental worry seems beyond your capacity, the torture I go through at having lost Adele. For I can't forget—you killed her."

"I didn't. Would you like me to tell you again what happened? You hate me, have gone out of your way to see me punished for a crime I didn't commit. Do I look like a murderer, a woman-killer? No, and I'm not."

"Tell me, then—perhaps it will shake you! I'd like to see you show some remorse."

"I worked late that night, in Paris, and when I got home it was dark. I climbed two flights of stairs to our room—we were poor but happy together. The door stood half open. I went in. She lay in the center of the floor, shot through the head by a revolver close by her hand. I thought she'd done it herself. Maybe because of our poverty. It shocked me, blinded me. I picked up the gun, my eyes dim with horror. I don't know exactly what I did, maybe cried, maybe talked to myself, that's what the concierge heard, which he swore was a quarrel between us. My fingerprints, the Sûreté testified, were on the gun; they thought I was jealous of you, perhaps, and had killed her for that! But I wasn't. She loved me and I knew it."

"Shut up!" screamed Lavine. He shook violently. He began to hit Hanson in the face, in the body, with all his puny force. But his muscles soon tired, he breathed in gasps, and he stopped. The American took it without a quiver. "Damn you—murderer!" shouted Lavine, flinging open the door. "Come, Riche! We'll start into the jungle—"

CHAPTER II.

LAVINE'S SECRET.

THE penitentiary gates opened to let the forty-odd out. They were marched by ten *surveillants* under Commandant Riche through the littered, baking streets of St. Laurent, the prison town. Black vultures preened their feathers on garden walls and housetops. The walks were empty of the many-shaded Negroes who formed the bulk of the free population, for it was siesta hour.

The guards carried Lebel rifles, and pistols at their sides, umbrellas for shade. Convicts shouldered knapsacks of their keepers as well as their own. Riche led the way to the Maroni, to a pier along the amber river. Under a corrugated iron shed stood tarpaulin-covered boxes, tightly nailed, marked with large black letters, "Machinery—With Care!" And wooden litters, like stubby ladders, on which the powerful convicts hoisted a heavy box so it might be carried. They loaded them through the hot afternoon onto a long barge. And each man, as he returned with his stretcher partner to fetch another box, stared longingly northward in the direction of the Atlantic, avenue to Freedom. Behind, on both sides, was the jungle for hundreds of miles, mysterious, deadly, hemming them in.

Commandant Riche amused himself by prodding the small Etienne with the ferrule of his umbrella, hurrying him at the impossible task of lifting a box evidently full of scrap iron. The apache hopped, he swore, face plainly showing his rage.

"If only I had that machine gun now," he muttered to Hanson, the strongest of all, whose muscles had little difficulty performing the tasks. "I'd turn it loose!"

The loading finished, Riche sent a messenger for Baron Lavine. The commandant produced steel collars then, narrow but strong. "These are your necklaces, *bag-*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nards," he told them cheerfully as they lounged, panting, on the deck of the flat barge where they had loaded the boxes. "Chains run through the eye-staple at the side of each collar, you see, so if you try to run away during the night you'll have to drag each other through the jungle by the neck! My idea. Pretty, *hein?"*

The crushed men did not object; it was usual to chain jungle gangs during the darkness. Riche and his guards locked a steel circlet around the neck of every *bagnard;* at the side, under the ear, was the closed eye-staple through which the chain would pass.

Lavine came, morose, silent. At the rear of the long flatboat was a khaki army tent for him; the guards had pup tents, the convicts no cover at all. "They say that little monkey Lavine has great power in France," a big convict whispered to Hanson. "He can get anything he wants from the *Ministre.* And I could snap him in two with one hand!"

Slowly the powerful *bagnards,* ex-soldiers of the African Battalions, tattooed rascals condemned for murder, theft and desertion; big farmers of France, and men of other nations who had run afoul of the Republic's law, all sweating, ill-fed miserables, poled the heavy barge upriver. For days that seemed interminable, backs aching under the strain, for nights laden with fever-bearing insects which bit their defenseless bodies chained together by Riche's dog-collars, they fought on. The collars were always on; at sundown the guards would run the flexible chain through the staples and it would be locked at either end by Riche.

THEY reached a point out from civilization, which was along the coast. Only bush Negroes in mud-and-thatch jungle villages lived in the thick bush of southern Guiana. At last the barge was halted one night, and in the early dawn of the following day the convicts were ordered to unload the boxes. The litters had been brought, so that two partners carried two boxes on a stretcher along with several small packs containing equipment.

Etienne was worn out; his slight body could not stand the pace. He groaned under the load, sometimes fell. Hanson had the rear of the stretcher with the apache in front; the American tried to keep both boxes near his end to relieve Etienne.

They swung southeast from the river into the jungle. The treetops reared two hundred feet above, a mat of aërial vegetation of lianas, vines and leaves forming a roof through which the sun penetrated but occasionally in thin, white darts, so there was always a dank, rotting odor below. However, as they bore away from the stream, and pushed on mile after mile along a faint Indian trail, two men widening the path with machetes, the mushy lowlands gave way to higher, drier ground.

Resting at sundown the first day from the Maroni, Etienne spoke with his pal Hanson. Riche and Lavine camped some yards from the line of gray convicts. The chain had been passed through the staples, locked. Several guards lounged about; two were on duty, one at either end of the camp.

"I've got to get away," Etienne whispered.

"How?" Hanson asked calmly.

"I'll cut this collar somehow, run back to the river, head through the bush for Paramaribo. I still have my knife hidden on me. Riche devils me constantly, and if I were you I'd squash that dirty Lavine next time he kicked me. He's pulled every lousy trick on you, Hanson."

Hanson's face did not change.

"Will you escape with me?" asked Etienne.

Slowly the big man shook his head. "I don't want to."

"But—you must be *cafard!* Mad! Everyone wishes to get away from this hell, this Dry Guillotine."

"One place is the same to me as another. It's terrible here but I make the best of it, hoping some day to be cleared of the crime they say I committed. That's the only way out for me—if there is a way." He was silent a moment, evidently fighting to maintain his iron control. "It's my way of bearing it, you see."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Etienne cursed. "If only I could get back to France! Though she condemned me I love her. Why, I could pull some swell jobs. I was sent to Guiana, you know, for my part in the stick-up of the Marseilles National bank—my mob was up-to-date, believe me. We used sub-machine guns; I was best of all with them. American guns, Thompsons. Fire so fast you can wipe out a squad of *flics* before they can draw their pistols, cut them in half with .45 slugs! If I had one now!"

AND later on, when velvet-black night had fallen, Hanson woke from troubled sleep. He could hear a faint, squeaking sound. Close by him, flat, the apache worked at his collar. "Shh," Etienne said. Hanson shrugged, closed his eyes again. Next day he noted that the small one's collar, especially the eye-staple, was coated with dried mud, as though Etienne had lain on that side through the night. It seemed natural enough; other men had earth on them. The chain pulled through without hindrance when they were released for the march.

Through another sweltering day they pushed on. Riche goaded Etienne; and Baron Lavine cursed Hanson.

Again, that night, Hanson was awakened by Etienne's stealthy movements. It was late, but a lamp burned in Lavine's tent, Hanson could hear Riche's gruff voice mingling with the Baron's lighter tones. A sentry stood at each end of the long line of sleeping *bagnards*. The others rested.

Etienne was not in his place. Hanson put out his hand. The chain had not been cut in any way; he concluded that the apache had managed to saw one side of the eye-staple so he could turn it and work the chain out. A faint sound close behind him caused him to look around quietly. Etienne wormed back into line, and adjusted the chain, working it into the staple and covering the split with dirt.

"Hanson," whispered the apache excitedly, "I know what's in the boxes! The secret of Lavine! I heard Riche trying to wheedle more money out of him—Riche has guessed what's up, and wants his split. Lavine called him a crook, but Riche insists he'll get his—"

The commandant stepped from Lavine's tent, and Etienne broke off. They watched Riche go to his pup tent, pull up the mosquito netting, his movements showing against Lavine's lighted tent wall.

After midday next afternoon they met the black men in the forest. There were a half dozen, armed with rifles, clad in green uniforms, plainly a delegation from a larger band. Lavine parleyed with them as the convicts rested on their loads. Then the baron ordered Riche to take the *bagnards* away, leaving the boxes.

An hour later, having parted from Lavine and the blacks in the forest clearing where they had connected, the French prisoners heard in the distance a sound like the rattling of a stick along a metal picket fence, compelling, rapid. Hanson felt Etienne trembling. "Sub-machine guns," whispered the apache. "Lavine has brought them in here to sell to those soldiers—he'll get plenty and Riche wants a cut."

The commandant strolled over, cigarette drooping from his gash of a mouth. He frowned, kicked Etienne. "What are you whispering about, *bagnard?*"

Etienne scowled up at his enemy, the sadistic Riche.

CHAPTER III.

MUTINY.

NEXT morning when gray dawn woke Hanson, he found Etienne gone, out of sight. The chain space was vacant. Frie, the man at the other side, a stocky *zéphyr* from the Bat' d' Afrique, well-liked by his fellows because he sometimes essayed a jest, in Guiana where there was nothing but sadness, winked at Hanson.

"The little one's made the break," he whispered. "See how Riche takes it; he's had plenty fun deviling Etienne."

Riche, coming from under his netting, yawned, took out a cigarette, lit up, blew

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clouds of bluish smoke toward the jungle roof. They were camped in a natural clearing; a few darts of sun could reach in. Riche extracted the key to the padlocks that held the long chain, and unlocked the end toward the river. Then, still sleepy, he walked slowly along the line to unfasten the second lock and pull the chain through. And suddenly, coming on Hanson, he noticed the vacant space, realized Etienne was gone.

He cursed, turned red, knelt quickly and picked up the chain. "The dirty little rat," he bawled. "Gris! Meurot!" He was calling for his two sentinels. Gris, a lanky guard, appeared from around a bend in the trail toward the Maroni. But Meurot, who had been on duty inland, failed to reply. Riche snarled, "You'll suffer, you Frie, and Hanson! Yes, I'm going to see you get yours for letting him stroll off."

"We were asleep, M'sieu le Commandant," cried Frie. "We slept soundly, as always in this pleasant land."

A subdued ripple of amusement ran along the ranks; it infuriated Riche, made him grind his teeth. "I'll teach you dogs a lesson in a moment," he shouted. He drew his Ruby pistol, ran to seize Guard Gris's arm. "Fool—didn't you see or hear the shrimp?"

"No, no, Commandant; he didn't come my way."

Riche started back the other side. They heard him after a minute bawling for Meurot. Next he began calling Gris, who went to him, and they dragged back to the camp Meurot's corpse, throat slit from ear to ear.

Baron Lavine pushed out his tent flap, eyes red, mouth crooked. "What is it, Riche?" he demanded.

"One has escaped," replied Riche, "and murdered my guard Meurot—a terrible reflection on me. But I'll get the killer, tear him to pieces—"

Lavine rushed to him. "Not Hanson?" he cried.

"No. It was Etienne, the little rat. But I must try to trail him."

Riche was gone with three *surveillants*. The others stood alert over the unchained prisoners. Whispers of excitement ran along the line. "Etienne can't get away, it's too far through the bush." "He has no food, no money, he'll die in the jungle." "Well, anyway, he'll die free!"

Lavine came over to Hanson. "I was afraid you'd gone, Hanson. When Riche said 'murder' I thought you'd killed—again."

Hanson stared up into his enemy's eyes. "No, I don't want to escape, not as a fugitive. There'd be no place for me in this world, forever condemned. But I have faith, I know some day I'll be declared innocent."

Lavine bit his pale lip, turned quickly away.

Riche returned in twenty minutes, cursing. "No tracks, ground's too dry," he announced. "But he'll die in the jungle, never get away."

AND he came toward Hanson and Frie, slowly, and with the intention of getting revenge on them. He bulked over the seated convicts. "You two were guilty with Etienne of Meurot's murder," he accused. "When you return to the prison it will be to the guillotine for allowing Etienne to escape. Why didn't you call out when he sawed his collar, *hein?* You're both brutes—you knew he meant to slit my guard's throat." He kicked Hanson, then swung on Frie, began beating the *zéphyr* over the head with his fists.

The soldier, tattooed from ankles to neck, lost his frayed temper and, with a ferocious growl, swung his powerful arm sideways, tripping Riche, sending him sprawling. It was a mortal offense to strike a guard. Speechless with rage—though perhaps he had hoped to goad Frie to such a length—Riche came up on his knees, fumbling at his holstered Ruby. Hanson reached out, seized the commandant's gun arm, knocked it down as Riche pulled the trigger. The bullet thudded dully into the dirt.

Held helpless in the iron grip of the giant American, pistol useless since Hanson kept the arm tightly down, barrel pointed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the ground, Riche screamed with the stridency of madness for his guards. " Kill Hanson—kill them all," shouted Riche, voice cracking.

Four of his men dashed to him, and shoved between Hanson and the commandant, forcing Hanson back. Riche held absolute power over the convicts; none had ever dared touch him. It was a mortal offense to do so at the prison. In the jungle it was punishable by instant death. And Frie made the mistake of grinning at the officer's fury. The *surveillants* stood between Riche and Hanson, but Frie was unprotected, it was he who had first struck Riche. Thirsting for some victim's blood, Riche quickly raised his pistol and fired three bullets into Frie.

Hanson, having allowed the guards to push him back, cursed. The cold murder enraged him, his breath came swiftly. He cried in anger, heaved his great body to his feet, against the four guards who strove to hold him down. A roar of rage rose from the throats of the other *bagnards* as they realized the murder of Frie, whom all had liked. They had stood too much already. They gathered in a threatening circle around the commandant, whose eyes were flecked with red, whose mouth was twisted. Hanson scattered those between Riche and himself like chaff, sweeping his mighty arms. Riche saw him reaching out, turned and fired a quick shot that passed through Hanson's blouse sleeve and seared the flesh of his upper shoulder. The American had Riche's gun wrist, however, and jerked it so hard that the commandant's elbow gave a cracking sound, Riche screaming in pain. Hanson tore the Ruby from his fingers and threw it off into the bushes.

Half a dozen of the guards stuck rifle muzzles against Hanson, hammers back. " Stop, American, or we'll shoot—"

The growl of the convicts, of infuriated wild beasts, swelled to a roar. Hanson, after disarming Riche, stood quiet, head up. The commandant's anger could not be quenched, however, by anything but more blood. Used to absolute command, Riche snatched a Ruby from the belt of a guard.

" Stand back, away from the American," he ordered dangerously. " He's going to die—"

Baron Lavine, pale, trembling, suddenly cried out, " Stop! Riche—you mustn't—"

As Riche, gun up, did not fire for a moment, Lavine took courage, stepped over and touched Riche's tense arm. " Put down that gun, Riche," Lavine gasped. " You're mad. You'll be courtmartialed for this. I'll see to it—"

LAVINE failed to realize the depth of Riche's rage. Every other impulse was smothered by its immensity, and the commandant thought of nothing save killing Hanson. He had paused a moment simply to clear the way for his shot and let Hanson realize he was going to die. The American stared into Riche's fiery eyes. All the guards were close, looking only at their commandant, frightened by his fury.

Again the scared Lavine pulled Riche's arm. The commandant's brain snapped, he swept the pistol up, jabbing it into Lavine's face. By intent or by accident his finger convulsed on the trigger as the baron staggered back, clutching at his split lip, bruised by the sharp gun sight. An instant later there was a roar as the big pistol went off, and Lavine fell, lay silent.

Blood at once began to stain the white uniform he wore, blood from his breast under the heart.

And as Commandant Riche swung and once again raised his Ruby, intent on shooting Hanson, the convicts made a concerted lunge in, overrunning the bunched, pale-faced *surveillants*. The *forçats* screamed with the sound of men driven beyond the limit, berserk, and every one of the big fellows wished to get his hands on Riche and tear him to pieces.

" Mutiny—mutiny—!" The cry rose in shrill crescendo. And the guards began firing at short range, rifles at the hip, pulled in. Three convicts went down at the first volley. A slug from Riche's pistol whizzed close to Hanson's head; then he was struck by the surging mass of heavy men, knocked to his knees.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Screams, curses, shots. Half a dozen guards, breaking before the mob's charge, dashed with Commandant Riche in their center back for the trees across the clearing, and paused there, firing as fast as they could into the seething mutineers who had got their hands on three *surveillants,* torn away their rifles, stamped them underfoot, beating the life out of them. Under the steady fire from Riche and his men, convicts fell swiftly. A *zéphyr* snatched up one of the rifles taken from the fallen guards, began shooting at the party of guards among the trees. The din was horrible.

A soldier beside Riche fell, bullet through the throat, sent by the *zéphyr.*

"Take cover, men," shouted the commandant, leaping behind a forest giant. Riche was a soldier, used to fire and cool under it, able to think when bullets flew around him. From the side of his tree trunk, Riche shot steadily into the bunched convicts.

Hanson was down, he was kicked, trampled on by the bare feet of his friends in their excitement. They milled in the clearing, yelling and swearing, while Riche and his men steadily poured a murderous lead hail at them. For moments the fact that their pals on the outer edge of the mass were shot did not register on the *forçats,* mad with mob-rage. Half had fallen under the fire of the guards; the remainder, suddenly realizing they were being picked off steadily, was seized by panic, broke, scattered, trying to escape. Riche showed no mercy, but brought down man after man, as did his guards.

"Every one shall die!" he screamed. "Not one of you shall go back to the prison. Fire, men, fire!"

Hanson, dazed, bruised, covered with blood from dying and wounded, rubbed his eyes with his torn blouse sleeve. Riche saw him move, shouted, turned his gun on Hanson. "You, American pig—"

ABOVE the din, which lessened as the stricken *bagnards* fled, a sudden sharp staccato sound came from the jungle behind the soldiers. Riche, a few yards in advance of his men, having stepped forth to murder Hanson, paled, turning swiftly.

Hanson, ready to die, knowing Riche would surely kill him, stared at the sight in the trees. Etienne, half crouched, had come up in the rear of the *surveillants.* In his hands he held a thick weapon with pistol grip ahead, shoulder butt firmly pressed into his side, half rifle, half machine. A bulge of black metal showed the large magazine; from the muzzle of the submachine gun .45 slugs spat at terrific rate, a scything hail of lead. Steadily, deliberately, but with no wasted motion, the small apache, teeth showing in his joy, swung the blunt muzzle along the line of guards. In a few moments they were dead, riddled, before they could half turn.

Riche shouted hoarsely, fired a wild shot at Etienne that passed over the little one's head. The apache was now moving slowly in on him, the muzzle of his weapon raised. Riche pulled his trigger again—and the firing pin hit an empty shell—

"I got you, Riche, you pig, you gutter snipe, you murderer—" screamed Etienne.

Riche threw himself flat, frantically trying to reload his gun. But Etienne was upon him, and Riche groveled in the dirt, begging for mercy. Etienne stood grinning down at his deadly enemy.

"Don't—" began Hanson. But it was over before he could cross the space to Riche and the apache, over in a moment. Nothing could stop Etienne's revenge. Hanson saw the gloating joy in Etienne's dark face. And after an instant's triumph, watching the fright in Riche's eyes, the apache, an expert machine-gunner, held the black muzzle on the commandant and fired. The rat-a-tat-tat was dull, muffled by the closeness of the gun to the body. As though spraying an ant hill, his form turning slightly back and forth, Etienne poured the slugs into the prostrate Riche.

When Hanson seized his friend's arm, Riche was practically cut in two.

Etienne's breath came in great gasps. He threw up his arms in victory. "I knew I'd win," he cried. "*Bagnards,* come back!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This beautiful weapon has freed you. Come!"

Eight convicts, left of the forty besides Hanson and Etienne, after peeking from the bush, slowly returned to the apache's side. The rest lay dead or wounded, in heaps and where they had fallen on the run, in the clearing. The smoke of the exploded powder tinged the air with an acrid odor, and a low sound of groans came from the injured.

"I stole it, boys," Etienne went on excitedly. "I knew those blacks wouldn't watch the guns as carefully as Riche did! I trailed them; they had camped a few miles back in the bush, a couple of hundred of them. I crept in, cut a sentry's throat in the night, got my gun and three loads of bullets! I was hidden near here when the shooting began."

Etienne was the leader. "We'll escape," he announced. "Plenty of food and equipment, guns for us all and—money. We'll beat back to the river, cross over to Dutch Guiana and down to Paramaribo. Nothing can stop us; we'll shoot our way to freedom, *bagnards*. Thank me—or rather my beautiful gun here. It speaks a language any *flic* respects. *Vite,* let's go. Cut all throats of guards left; we want no witnesses against us. The wounded cons must do the best they can. Come on, Hanson. Escape, and the world of the living once again!"

THE big American had been sickened by the bloodshed. He saw a convict kill a *surveillant* who groaned, moved. He followed Etienne over as the apache, the sub-machine gun under one arm, began searching the corpses.

"What are you looking for?" demanded Hanson.

"Cash. I want the dough the blacks paid your pal the baron—he's dead, huh? He can't bother you any more—here he is, dirty rat that he was. It was a state revolution he came up here to supply with guns, I found that out by my keen ears. The rebels couldn't get enough weapons in front from the coast; the government had the ports all covered; but Lavine figured out how to reach them."

Etienne bent over the baron, who lay on his side, head covered by an extended arm. Roughly the apache rolled Lavine over on his back, and ripped open his tunic, soaked with blood. He drew from the breast pocket over the heart a picture, looked curiously at it, laughed and showed it to Hanson. "His sweetheart back in France—one of 'em, I guess," he said carelessly.

Hanson was trembling. The portrait was of Adele, his dead wife, for whose murder he had been condemned to Guiana. "Give it to me," he growled, and snatched it from Etienne.

He stared into that face, sweet, full of life, that had meant the world to him. Life had stopped suddenly for Hanson at her death; his arrest had come, his trial, conviction and deportation to Guiana.

"Lavine loved her, too," he muttered painfully.

Etienne had again bent over the baron. He drew out a leather wallet, but as he extracted a paper from it he began to sputter curses. "A draught made out to Lavine!" he cried disgustedly. "No good to me. That shrimp was a smart fox, no doubt of it. Oh, well. There'll be some francs for us on the guards." He turned Lavine over and hunted in the other pockets, found a small roll of bills and some silver.

Lavine moaned, faintly, opened his eyes, glassy, staring. He did not seem to realize where he was; did not see the men at his side.

"Ain't dead. Well, we'll fix him," growled Etienne. "Here, Hanson, you can have the pleasure of finishing him. Go ahead, just touch that trigger—"

Hanson shook his head. "No. I won't kill him."

Etienne shrugged, raised the gun. "I'll do it, then, since you're so squeamish—"

But Hanson tore the weapon from him and flung it away. "Let him be," he ordered.

Etienne shrugged, went and retrieved his precious gun. The convicts had stripped the bodies of valuables, make packs of food,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strung together canteens of wine and whisky. They were drinking already, drinking to drown out horror.

Hanson squatted beside Lavine. The baron breathed very faintly, hardly disturbing the red-stained breast of his tunic. Yes, Adele had been sorry for this twisted, unfortunate man with his millions, whom everyone had hated. Lavine had seen her as she danced in a cabaret. Hanson put his face in his scarred hands, and fought to control his emotions. The past was as dead as his wife. The present was horrible—and there was no future but torture.

"COME on, Hanson," said Etienne impatiently, back at his side. "He'll die quick enough and the vultures and ants can finish him up fine. Let's get started."

"I'm not going with you," said Hanson.

"What? You must be bitten by the bug, you fool. You can't stay here in the jungle."

"I'm going back to prison."

Etienne's eyes narrowed. He began to think that Hanson was really mad. "You realize they'll guillotine you for mutiny? And d' you think we'll give you a chance to squeal on us, say which way we've headed?"

"You know damn well I'm no traitor; I won't tell that, Etienne. But—there's no way out for me. I've been convicted of murder. I'm an honest man—or I was. I couldn't live happily any other way. I'd like to go back to America, try to forget what's past; but I couldn't do it as a fugitive."

The apache shrugged. "*Bien,*" he replied coldly. "Have it your own way. But you're nuts, Hanson. We can't fail to get away with guns, food and money. Nothing will stop me, with this baby in my arms." He patted his sub-machine gun. "*Adieu,* then—and good luck. Don't tell anyone which way we've headed, in case you get to St. Laurent before we reach the sea." He turned and rallied his pals. A few of the wounded convicts could walk, though most of those hit had died, since Riche and his men had aimed for the head, to kill. The *bagnards* loaded injured survivors on the stretchers and swung into line, heading west for the Maroni.

Hanson was alone with the dead—and his wounded enemy. Etienne had left him some food, drink. Urged by finer instincts than the criminal apache could comprehend, the big man tended the terrible wound under the baron's heart, washing it clean, staunching the flow of blood, finally bandaging it. He packed food and water and brandy, strapped the knapsack on his side. Then, gently, he lifted the unconscious Lavine and placed the small figure on his back, started for the river. The wound in his shoulder burned where he had roughly cauterized it to stop infection; at each step he felt a pang of anguish from the ripped, scarified flesh.

With his human burden, the mighty American strode on, slowly following the others toward the river, but keeping out of their sight. In his pocket he carried the blood-stained picture of Adele.

CHAPTER IV.

CONFESSION.

IT was a scarecrow figure which staggered from a bush Negro's dugout at St. Laurent, and lifted Baron Lavine, at the point of death, to the pier. A prison guard saw, hurried to Hanson. Each day throughout the long trip down the river, Hanson had expected the baron to die, for every hour drained more of the wounded man's life. Hanson, face bearded, stained black, covered with dried blood, went to the prison blockhouse after they had identified him. "One of the mutineers," the prison commandant growled at the interview.

Hanson was so weary he did not mind lying on the bare boards of the blockhouse into which he was cast. He slept at once, unheeding, not disturbed by the restless movements of other prisoners there.

When he finally woke, asked for water, the convicts—all had broken a prison rule

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or been arrested trying to escape and were awaiting trial—demanded eagerly details of the great mutiny. Word had filtered to the prison and all were anxious to hear just what had occurred. He satisfied their curiosity, but without saying where the survivors had gone.

"You, you were a wise one," the *bagnard* next him growled. "Wise not to go with that crazy flea Etienne."

"Why?" demanded Hanson.

"Don't you know? They were all killed or captured."

"How—how?" cried Hanson.

"Oh, it was a great battle. They got all the way down to the outskirts of Paramaribo and then they bumped into a Dutch police patrol out looking for another gang of prisoners from here—you know they have special cops to pick us up. Etienne killed three Dutchmen."

"And the machine gun?"

The other convicts laughed. "It jammed! Otherwise Etienne would have killed that whole patrol. The remaining Dutchies shot him dead before he could get it working again. With Etienne down, they took the rest easily enough—but they say the shrimp fell with a smile on his lips, gun tucked under his arm.

"You'll probably get a year in solitary on *Ile Joseph;* but at least you're alive to tell the tale."

THAT evening they came for Hanson, brought him clothes — prisoners lay without garments in the blockhouse. He was led to the hospital.

A priest stood near Baron Lavine's bed, and on the other side were two high prison officials. The small man lay with head back, face completely drained of blood. He looked up at Hanson, his lips moving.

"You may go to him, American," the Governor told Hanson.

Hanson bent over Lavine. "I—hated you," Lavine whispered. "I blamed you for winning her love. I wanted to break you, as I had been broken. But I couldn't. And I always saw her eyes, the look in them when I killed her!" The pain was in Lavine's eyes and face; he moved slightly, teeth grinding together.

"He is dying," the Governor told Hanson gently. "He has signed a confession that it was he who murdered your wife. He shot her when she refused to leave you for him. He bribed the concierge to perjure himself on the witness stand, to convict you—we cabled back to France and received our reply; the concierge admitted to Sûreté officials that what Lavine says is true. It is all down in black and white, Lavine's free confession. His conscience has always tortured him, he told me he has never rested soundly since he killed the woman. He came to Guiana in the hope of having you murdered in the jungle. He feared that some day you might discover the truth. But when it came to letting Riche shoot you, he was unable to go through with it. And now, dying, he is no longer afraid to tell the truth. In retribution he has willed you a large sum of money —and your freedom."

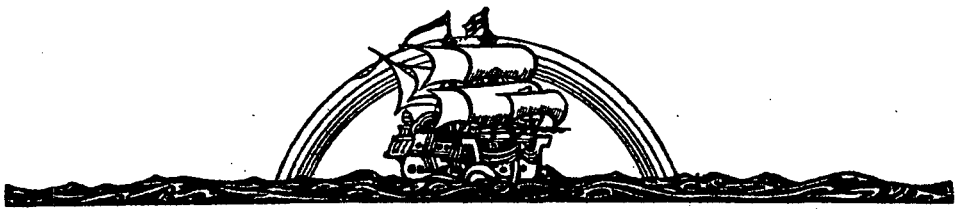
Hanson's fists clenched; he took a step forward, toward Lavine. "He—he killed her!"

"Forgive—" whispered Lavine.

Hanson stood erect. "I—forgive you, Lavine."

He could not trust himself to look for moments on the baron's face. When he did so, the eyes were still open, wide, and round. But now there was no pain, no torture in them. They were at peace forever.

THE END



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEN OF DARING
(by) STOOKIE ALLEN
FLYING SOLDIER
PHILIP MOHUN WAS BORN WITH A LOVE OF FIGHTING. FROM EARLIEST BOYHOOD HE CRAVED ADVENTURE AND ACTION. A SON OF PHILIP V. MOHUN, RETIRED NAVAL COMMANDER OF NEW YORK, HE WAS BORN IN THAT CITY IN 1903. HE ATTENDED THE PENNSYLVANIA MILITARY INSTITUTE AT CHESTER, PA.
-PHILIP-
"RED" MOHUN
AS A CADET BUGLER HE PLAYED THE "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" INSTEAD OF THE REVEILLE, ONE WINTER MORNING, CAUSING THE ENTIRE COMPANY TO JUMP OUT AND STAND AT ATTENTION—BAREFOOTED AND PAJAMA-CLAD — IN THE SNOW! THE ESCAPADE COST HIM EXPULSION AND THE DISPLEASURE OF HIS DAD.
YOUNG MOHUN WENT OFF ON HIS OWN AND JOINED A FLYING CIRCUS. HE LEARNED TO FLY AND TO STUNT. AFTER A BARNSTORMING FOR A TIME IN THE SOUTH, HE WENT IN FOR GUN-RUNNING, AND FLEW CASES OF LIQUOR FROM BIMINI TO FLORIDA BY SEAPLANE. MOHUN COULD NOT SETTLE DOWN.
SEEKING SOME REAL ACTION RED BECAME A FLYER FOR THE NATIONALIST FORCES IN CHINA, IN 1926. HE BOMBED PIRATES AS WELL AS THE OPPOSING CHINESE. AT FOO CHOW HE GOT INTO A FIGHT WITH A CHINAMAN WHOM HE HAD CAUGHT STEALING GASOLINE AND DROVE HIS FIST SO HARD ON THE JAW OF HIS ADVERSARY THAT THE MAN SLAMMED INTO A WALL AND DROPPED DEAD AT REDS FEET!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LATER MOHUN AND A GERMAN SIGNED UP TO DO DUTY AS CHAMMORA'S AIR FORCE IN NICARAGUA. IT WAS THEIR JOB TO SCOUT THE JUNGLES FOR THE CAMPS OF THE REBELS AND TO BOMB THEM. ONE DAY THEIR PLANE CRACKED UP IN A TREE. THE GERMAN WAS KILLED AND RED WAS DRAGGED FROM THE WRECKAGE MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE.
BOTH HIS KNEECAPS WERE SPLIT. NATIVES PUT HIM BETWEEN TWO MULES AND HE WAS 11 DAYS GETTING TO A HOSPITAL! "RED" SAILED MONTHS LATER FOR NEW YORK, HIS LEGS IN A CAST AND A SILVER PLATE IN HIS HEAD.
IN '29 MOHUN WAS IN MEXICO FLYING FOR THE FEDERALS. HE PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST MEXICAN AIR BATTLE ON RECORD, TOSSED "PINEAPPLES" ON TORREON, AND ONCE FLEW 400 LBS. OF NITROGLYCERINE FROM JUAREZ TO CHIHUAHUA, NONCHALANTLY SMOKING CIGARETTES THE WHILE!
CHANGING SIDES, THE FIERY "RED" WAS ENGAGED ONE DAY IN BOMBING NACO, A BORDER TOWN. HE BECAME CONFUSED AS TO DIRECTIONS AND DROPPED HIS BOMBS ON THE AMERICAN SIDE. THAT MISTAKE, WITH AN ALLEGED NEUTRALITY VIOLATION, PUT MOHUN OUT OF IT FOR A WHILE. SINCE THEN HE HAS BEEN GETTING IN AND OUT OF SCRAPES, AND ALL THE WHILE ACHING TO BE OFF AGAIN TO WAR—ANY WAR!

Next Week: Captain Ronald H. Stuart, Sea Hero.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tube-Nose had seized the advantage in the first second of attack

The Lonely Killer

By ANTHONY M. RUD

Ten thousand in a day he killed—but they were only ants, and another jungle denizen was out to kill him

HE has no friends, no audible sounds with which to talk to them in jungle language. He has no mate, save for one short week in the year. He has only one ambitious enemy, among all the creatures of the Orinoco valley, though millions would be safer if he died.

Of all the beasts who walk on land, man included, he slaughters in the most wholesale fashion. On any day he feels normally hungry, he can be counted upon to murder a small army of perhaps 10,000—ants!

He is the giant armored ant-bear of the jungle.

A squat, timid tapir sees him lying there on the ground, looking like some huge lump of fungus with a hairy fan on top. For a moment the horse-pig is deceived. He wonders. He lowers his curious, twitching snout.

Then up floats the stench of formic acid, the odor of ants. Three or four thousand of them, eaten for breakfast, are being crushed and digested by this creature under the hairy fan.

The tapir snorts and gallops away. Fire ants nearly ate him alive once as he slept, and he fears the scent.

The pile of fur, sixteen to eighteen inches

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in length and striped gray and black, suddenly rises on end! Back and up swishes slowly the most magnificent brush in the animal kingdom; a tail forty inches in length and nearly thirty in breadth, which Tube-Nose, the ant-bear, uses as a waterproof and sunproof shield for his body as he sleeps.

He lumbers up awkwardly now. A little early for tiffin, perhaps, but he can always eat. A Mundurucu Indio, hunting with his blowtube, sees him and stops. The stocky brown savage is hungry, too, but he does not raise the lethal weapon.

He watches a moment, because the great ant-bear is a rarity. He sees a beast with a body four feet long, two feet high at the shoulder; an awkward, dim-sighted animal; somewhat like a small bear, more like a magnified polecat, but with a head and long, tapering snout shaped like a prize parsnip.

That head and mouth have no jaws at all, only the tube out of which, when he feeds, the ant-bear pokes a sticky cylindrical tongue to which ants adhere helplessly until they can be ingested. When not used, this tongue is folded double in his throat.

The body is heavily massed with gray hair, which grows more black toward the tail. There are gray streaks of hair standing up as a stiff mane along his neck and spine.

Once the Indio who watched half-raised his ten-foot zarabatan, but then he lowered it. The ant-bear had just two spots vulnerable to poisoned darts—his eyes. And when he blinks the scaled lids, it is doubtful that a dart would pierce them. Anyhow, when awake he waggles his long, parsnip head slowly from side to side, and it would be hard to hit one of his tiny, beady eyes at twenty feet with a rifle.

Over the rest of his body, under the deceptive hair, Tube-Nose is protected almost as thoroughly with plate armor as an armadillo. Snake fangs cause him no worry. Teeth and claws of the ocelot glance off and leave no marks except on the hair.

He has only one real enemy, the wisest (reputedly) of all jungle creatures; and he, Tube-Nose, is that wise creature's one incurable folly! The boa-constrictor lives long enough to acquire genuine wisdom, but he never learns how perilous it is to attempt to indulge his taste in the black, musky flesh of the tribe of Tube-Nose. Or if he does learn, he disregards experience like a dieting fat woman succumbing to a proffered cream puff.

THIS afternoon Tube-Nose saw the hesitating Indio, and stopped after two undulating, swaying-sidewise forward steps. He continued to swing his parsnip head, however, as he looked at the swarthy human creature there in his path. The black, near-sighted eyes saw enough to know that this might be an enemy. So Tube-Nose settled back to his haunches, exposing his triple-sheathed chest and abdomen, where claws of the ocelot blunted themselves instead of disembowelling, and the fiercest attacks of angry, inch-long termites were not even as much as a tickle.

Something strange and weird about him came to light then, something which went far to explain his queer waddle of a forward gait which made him look so much like some throwback to a dim age of land reptiles.

When he hunkered up for possible defence, he pulled his great talons forward *out of his sleeve!*

Or so it seemed. As a matter of fact he tucked them under when walking in the soft, deep leaf mould of the jungle. They are attached to the middle toe, which has stronger muscles and tendons than the forearm of a human wrestler.

The forearms themselves are immensely strong; with them an ant-bear can hug a leopard to death. But the two scimitar claws set amid others more ordinary!

These two middle-toe claws are curved, razor-edged, heavy beveled, and from six to nine inches in length. With them—but this day Tube-Nose was going to have to *show* what they could do!

Not more than once a year, perhaps, was he called upon to defend himself against his

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one really serious enemy. So this afternoon, as soon as the Indio with the blow-tube heard a far-off squealing of peccaries, and turned swiftly to intercept this more succulent game, Tube-Nose slowly lowered himself from his haunches and went about his mission in life—which was the destruction of teeming millions of ants.

There was no expression of satisfaction on his face. In fact, if you paint a carrot or a parsnip dead black, and stick in two black-headed pins near the thick end, you will have a miniature of the ant-bear's head at that moment. Of course the head was much bigger, and armored. More than this, it was set on a muscled, lithe neck with flexible vertebrae, so that a wallop from the paw of a big cat bothered very little.

Tube-Nose could "ride" such blows, much as a human boxer rides a punch he cannot deflect or parry. Only with much better success.

NOW he undulated along slowly through the green murk of the tropical jungle, bound for the ant towers of the Rio Capanaparo, which is a tributary of the Orinoco known to Indios and a few men of white skin—very few. Here where long ago the balata-gatherers had a camp the ground is open to the sun. And here huge colonies of black ants had swarmed to build their masonry fortresses.

Each black ant of the jungle was a fearsome creature in itself, much larger than a termite, though not as well drilled in regimental maneuvers. Seemingly each of the glistening, juicy black fellows was formed of two elongated licorice drops, held together at a waist as thin as that of a wasp. Tube-Nose fancied them, as a human gourmet fancies genuine caviar, buckshot sized. Even thinking about them in his dim way, he felt the sticky juices begin to exude from his long, deadly tongue.

The ant towers of the Capanaparo are a sight to make any man's flesh creep. Each one is built of a brown clay which bakes yellow-white in the sun. It is just about the same clay which was once used for making soap-bubble pipes, and in time it gets so hard that an ant tower four feet in diameter at the base would withstand the direct fire of a machine gun for many minutes, and show little damage.

The towers rise from three to twelve feet in height. Each one is a systematic honeycomb of ramps and corridors and chambers, through which the black ants rush, always in a hurry about something or other. They work under orders, though, and their system of self-government is one to make human beings turn green with envy. And they fear nothing, nobody in the whole world—save Tube-Nose. Were it not for him the ants would multiply at their terrific rate, build towers faster than a sub-division builder could throw up chalk box shacks for human tenants, and soon own every leaf and stalk and carcass of animal in the whole jungle.

In fact, one noted English entomologist, Sir Henry Ripley, has predicted that in time ants may rule the entire land surface of the globe, in spite of all that Tube-Nose and his tribe can do.

Tube-Nose was not concerned with vague prognostications. His life work was appetite; and his hunger bade him attack a tower and sate it. So he lumbered unhurriedly toward one of the smaller ant towers, containing only a few million of the juicy black tidbits.

At the base of the ant-tower—inside which no doubt there were alarums and excursions hither and thither, for the ant is a soldier and no doubt keeps sentinels posted—Tube-Nose gave a wriggle of satisfaction and sat him down. You could almost see him tie a napkin around his neck and smack his lips—only he did not have any lips, or even primitive table manners.

But then he set to work in businesslike fashion, showing just why he had those elongated middle claws like sickles. They started in to crack the cast-iron clay of the tower. Then they dug further, bringing out chunks. And he did it in less than fifteen minutes, paying no attention until he was all set and ready for the hordes of furious black warriors who swarmed out over him, biting at his armor, trying in vain

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to find a spot where they could hurt him.

Ants do not know the meaning of fear; and therein lies the story of how they can be limited if never eradicated. They fight and die. Well, that was all right with Tube-Nose, who could not have eaten anything else but ants, no matter how hard he tried.

IN a quarter hour his great talons had dug a hole right into the pipe-clay tower; and this aperture swarmed with indignant tenants. Now Tube-Nose wriggled ecstatically, and settled him down to business. He poked in that parsnip snout, and the cylindrical tongue shot back and forth, almost as fast as the forked tongue of a serpent.

With it went each time a few score or hundreds of juicy ants, who were scraped off inside the throat, as the tongue licked out for more.

It was not necessary for Tube-Nose to go ahead with progressive demolition of the clay tower fortress, hunting down the last survivors in some deep-buried medieval keep. Far from it! The black ants swarmed to battle, caring nothing for previous casualties. Had Tube-Nose possessed the capacity of an elephant, he could have sat right there and filled it to repletion.

But after a time his tongue began to move with less avidity. The little black beads of eyes seemed to glaze. And finally he settled back, completely filled. The survivors in the ant tower got hurried orders from their chiefs. A long line of them went downstairs and out into the river bank. Soon they started back with loads of fresh clay, with which to repair the damage. Life must go on!

Ah yes; but that command applies equally to all creatures of the jungle. Only a few of them, like the timid but speedy tapir, are willing to subsist on leaves and grasses. The others eat each other, and would starve if they didn't. So a constant game of red murder is played under the thick green canopy of the tropical jungle.

Tube-Nose felt peaceful. In fact he never did make war on any other jungle denizen except the ant; but he had to hold himself in readiness for defense. In his time he had fought a pack of peccaries; voracious, grunting little wild pigs. He had been compelled to tear to shreds enough of them so the cannibal hunger of the rest of the pack was satisfied, before he could limp away unnoticed. He had not been injured at all, but so utterly fatigued that another hour or so of combat probably would have found him helpless.

Another time a coughing jaguar, whose mate with kittens was only a few yards distant, had tried to chase the ant-bear. Only to be hugged and ripped until it yowled and slunk away, leaving the family unprotected while it licked its hurts. But Tube-Nose had no taste for jaguar kittens, no matter what the spitting demons of parents suspected.

Now, stuffed with his favorite food, Tube-Nose wanted only a good place at the base of a tree, where he could curl up like a hedgehog on the ground, and cover himself with his great fan of tail. After such a meal he would have been good for moveless slumber until midnight—at which time he would eat again.

But as he plodded slowly on his undulating way, a queer lonely creature who cared not at all for companionship, he came under the green canopy of jungle once more. And up there on the lowest limb of a red mahogany tree was something that looked almost like a dead branch. Almost. Tube-Nose never raised his swaying snout to see, even when the dead branch rippled slowly with the constrictive hunger of the great boa . . .

TWENTY feet of snake. A thickness of muscle and tough skin and plated scales; the snake was as great in diameter as the thigh of a 200-pound man. An engine of destruction which could encompass any jungle denizen, circle him with those sinewed loops, and slowly but surely squeeze him out into a slender, boneless sausage fit to be swallowed whole. Any jungle denizen, that is, save Tube-Nose, where the certainty was not so great.

The curious thing of it all was the fact

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the boa-constrictor particularly hungered for the musk-flesh of Tube-Nose. Such ironies are not explained by Nature; they simply exist.

But when the heavy thump came, which told of the snake coils striking the soft jungle carpet, and the wide open, toothed jaws fastened to the side of his neck. Tube-Nose cast aside lethargy. Seconds now meant life or death, and he knew it.

He threw himself backward, not even waiting for the first of those ripple coils to wind about his bear-like body, and seized the mid-section of the great snake in his hugging embrace.

Instantly then his scimitar talons began to tear their way into the whiter and softer under side of the great boa. After all, this was easy, compared to ripping a way into a flint-walled tower of ants!

It is not supposed, of course, that the boa-constrictor was just lying there meanwhile. He had come to kill and eat, and if he just once got those coils around the shoulders and forearms of the ant-bear, the struggle was finished. With his lever tail hooked in the greatest root of the mahogany tree, he swooped into a fast coil, and flung that coil like a hoop rolling on the ground, straight at his quarry.

Only that fast first act of Tube-Nose made it miss. But in a split second it was no longer a coil, but a writhing length of snake. Then it was a coil again, wrapping itself about the hind parts of the ant-bear, which were at once available and unprotected . . .

Then a tightening, an attempt to use leverage and make a quick kill, before this clawing, slicing fiend ripped the vitals out of the snake . . .

No chance! Tube-Nose had seized the advantage in the first second of attack, and not even the monstrous strength of the great constrictor serpent could make him loose his grip. Fastened to the very middle of a twenty-foot fury which tensed together in coils, and snapped outward like a released watch-spring, the ant-bear was tossed up, thrown sidewise, drubbed on the ground, constricted and then freed—and after a few seconds all the boa wanted was to get away from this leech-like thing which was tearing it in two!

Forgotten was appetite now. Viscid snake blood smeared the tree trunks and the ground. Rip! Rip! Rip! went the scimitar talons, always in the same place, almost like a woodsman's ax biting into the same V of white wood!

The great snake hissed and thrashed more wildly, hooping itself away, leaving the tree root leverage.

Then suddenly all was changed. Cut completely through in the middle, there were *two* snakes writhing in death throes there on the jungle carpet, leaping up and shivering, looping, flinging themselves this way and that. The end with the snake head caught a branch and went up in the tree's heights to die.

The other end flopped blindly a while till it found the edge of the water. Then something came up and seized it, bearing it below the surface.

Tube-Nose got down again to all fours. He swayed his parsnip head experimentally. Then he walked slowly away, limping a little in his right hind leg. He would seek a place where he could cover himself with his fan-like tail, and sleep off his bruises and fatigue.

THE END

This is the first of Anthony Rud's new series of animal short stories.

A 6—6

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Wild Man of Cape Cod

By FRED MacISAAC

William Warburton had to have those bonds at any cost—but in the price he did not reckon robbery, kidnaping and murder

LEADING UP TO THIS INSTALLMENT

STEVE COBB was fully aware that with his father's death and the subsequent loss of the Cobb Concrete Company to the unscrupulous William Warburton that the bulk of his fortune was gone. So Steve decided that in the future his life was to consist of "plain living and high thinking." Whereupon Steve went to live at a simple little shack which he had on Cape Cod, adjoining his old family estate, now owned by the Warburtons.

But Steve had one possession remaining from his former financial wealth—a block of Cobb Company bonds. These securities Warburton is extremely anxious to buy or to procure at almost any cost and by any means, fair or foul. His anxiety is based on the inconvenience this single holding will cause when he wants free rein to manage the Cobb Company. Warburton sends his "trouble man," Frank Hutton, to get hold of the bonds. He encounters Steve at the hut, and they have a desperate fight, resulting in Hutton's death. Steve had unintentionally killed him. Wondering how he will dispose of the crook's body, Steve swims out in the sea late at night, taking the corpse with him.

On returning to his shack, Steve finds the place in an overturned condition. The bonds are missing! Immediately Steve makes for Warburton's mansion, enters stealthily in an attempt to retrieve the bonds, and finds himself in the bedroom of Mrs. Warburton. They are surprised during their talk together by Mr. Warburton, who almost

He whipped a revolver from his pocket

This story began in the Argosy for March 23

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shoots Steve. But Steve manages to leave unharmed. Still believing that Warburton has the bonds, Steve contrives to take from the mails a registered envelope which Warburton has sent to his New York office. But to his sorrow, Steve learns that the envelope does not contain the missing bonds. Meeting Lucinda, Warburton's daughter, on the beach the next day, Steve is chided by her for apparently "visiting" her stepmother. Steve denies any attachment, but his denial does not seem to satisfy Lucinda.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VILLAGE SLEUTH.

HE cast a backward glance along the shore and observed that the green yawl was beating into the harbor. He grinned as he wondered if the remarkable Mrs. Warburton had made a date with its owner for tonight.

As he was passing the post office, Eben Cobb, a remote relative, came out of the Souvenir store opposite which he owned and beckoned. "Hey, Steve. Want to see you a minute."

Eben was a typical Cape character, a man of sixty who wore policeman's suspenders over his shirt and was always coatless. Upon the right suspender was pinned a carefully shined silver badge which read Cobbport Chief of Police. Eben was not only Chief but the police force as well. As the job paid a pittance, he earned a living running a souvenir and notion shop in a village which was off the state road and therefore not much frequented by tourists. Incidentally his souvenirs were badly chosen and slow moving.

"Got to ax you questions," he stated importantly. "Police business."

Steve grinned. "Fire away," he invited.

"Wall, it seems that a man named Frank Hutton, whose a guest of Mr. Warburton's, left there last night and ain't been seen hair or hide of."

"You don't say?"

"Yes siree," said the Chief emphatically. "And Mr. Warburton was in here personally and talked to me. He suspects foul play, he does."

"I'm shocked," said Steve gravely.

"Seems he set out to call on you," said the Chief, pulling reflectively at his gray goatee and gazing sharply at Steve with his small pale blue eyes.

"Not likely. Don't know him."

"He comes down here 'bout eleven o'clock and he asks the gas station boy where you lived."

"Sort of late for calling, eh?"

Eben nodded. "That's what I ben thinkin'. Howsomever, he had your house pinted out to him, and he was seen going up that way. And nobody has seen him since, Steve." This was said most dramatically.

"Eleven o'clock," remarked Steve. "Well, now, Eben, I can't help you. I didn't sleep in the house last night. I went up on the hummock with a blanket like I often do. You know that."

"Yep. You know it's my duty to investigate."

"Sure. And how you love it," Steve said with a grin.

"Now about this robbery at your house."

"Robbery?"

Eben cackled. He was a wisp of a man swelled with his own importance.

"Ain't nothing gets by me. I seen Myra Sears." He cocked his head to one side like a cheeky sparrow. "Myra says she seen a light in your place and she went up and woke you up and told you there were robbers. You went down there—"

"And there was nobody there," said Steve tartly.

"That's what you told her—but Myra says she heard a racket and voices."

"Myra was using her imagination. She came to the house and saw there was nobody in it."

"That's your story."

"Eben," said Steve sternly. "I'm going to grab your whiskers and pull them out by the roots if you insinuate—"

"I ain't insinuating," Eben declared hastily. "But it's very suspicious, it seems to me."

"You seem to insinuate that a guest of Mr. Warburton's went down and broke into my house. Isn't that absurd?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I ain't sayin' it was this Mr. Hutton. Don't seem likely—"

"YOU'RE investigating the disappearance of Hutton. Whether or not there was a burglary at my house is no affair of yours unless I lodge a charge."

"Maybe it wasn't burglary. Maybe Mr. Hutton that was inquiring for you went up to your place and you and him had a ruction—"

Steve grasped the gray goatee and twisted it until the chief of police howled.

"It's not likely that a guest of Mr. Warburton would call on a man he didn't know at eleven o'clock at night," the young man declared. "Forget it."

"Wall," said Eben doggedly. "I ben up to your place, and you not being to home, I looked round. I seen evidence of things being broken. I seen glass, lots of broken glass in your ash barrel. And this is what I dug out of the door jamb with my penknife."

He held up between thumb and forefinger a leaden bullet.

Steve gasped but instantly rallied. "You chump," he said, laughing, "that's probably been there for ages. I never noticed it myself. I give you credit for being a smart investigator, though, Eben. Not one policeman in a thousand would have dug out that bullet."

"I ain't no fool," said Eben complacently. "I keep up to date by reading detective stories."

"Now let me tell you something," declared Steve. "See that green yawl? She was here last night but gone this morning when I woke up. That ought to suggest something to a bright mind like yours."

"What?" demanded Eben.

"Not finding me at home, if he ever did call on me, Hutton might have gone out to the yawl. No doubt its owner is a friend of Warburton's. And the yawl might have taken him down to Woods Hole where he could get a train for somewhere."

"By gosh," exclaimed Eben. "I bet that's what happened. I'll go out and have a talk with the folks on that boat."

Steve, however, was considerably perturbed as he went on to his house. There had been plenty of breakage which he had swept up and deposited in the ash barrel. The bullet was one of those fired by Hutton, of course. He had a clear case of self defense in the killing of Hutton, and he had destroyed it by concealing the killing and getting rid of the body. The frightful part of it all was that his defense of his bonds had been to no purpose. They were gone. And if a thick-headed local constable like Eben could discover as much as he had turned up, what might a competent police detective find.

"I'm a double-distilled fool," Steve said dismally as he pushed open his door and entered his tiny house.

THE offices of William Warburton and Company occupied half a floor of a high building on Broadway near Wall Street. At ten on the morning following the events of the last chapter, Mr. Warburton entered his private office and there filed in after him his three partners, if men who received a very small percentage of the annual profits of the concern could be called his partners.

"Have an easy trip from the Cape, sir?" asked Partner James Worth solicitously.

"Tedious, but swift and satisfactory. I left the Cape landing field at seven and here I am. What's the Washington report, Worth?"

Mr. Worth, who was a spruce young man with a brown mustache, smiled complacently. "Splendid, sir. I've had an interview with the attorney general in person, discussed the new Securities Act and he agrees with me that there is no longer the slightest reason for holding up legitimate stock issues since the perilous clauses in the former Securities Act have been eliminated."

"Oh," said Warburton thoughtfully. "Mr. Brown."

"Prospectuses on the Cobb Concrete Company are prepared, sir, and I have gone over them. They are quite satisfactory. There is every reason for an increase of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capitalization from ten to twenty-five million dollars and our banks are ready to underwrite the issue. With the vast boom in building industries due to the Federal expenditure of billions, all development work, plants, imports and such are perfectly justifiable and sure to be very profitable. The N. R. A. is much pleased with our intention to double our working forces at a ten per cent increase in wages. I had a talk with the President of the Mammouth Bank who holds a good many of our notes and he was very much pleased."

"Nevertheless," said Warburton, "we've got to hold things up. We're not ready."

"But why not?" demanded Mr. Brown. "I have everything ready. The underwriting is arranged as I have explained. It's a matter of engraving the stock certificates—that's all."

"Hold things up. I didn't expect the Washington end would be cleared up so soon—" To himself he added: "I hoped it wouldn't."

Brown looked very grave. "We can't hold things up," he persisted. "We're extended like the devil. "The Cobb Company is the only thing we have which we can put over in a big way at this time. We have three millions in loans coming due in four weeks. I've had no intimation from the banks that they will be called, but if we don't float the Cobb Issues, they are apt to think there is something wrong and call our loans pronto."

Warburton bit his lip. "I expect to be ready in a week or ten days," he said. "Something has come up that I want to look into—"

"Nothing I hope which affects the Cobb Issues," said the third partner, Mr. Price, anxiously. "It's our ace, Mr. Warburton."

"Nothing serious. Go back to your desks, gentlemen. That's all."

After they had gone, the president of the company sat at his desk staring into vacancy. His business was "Other People's Business." His firm created nothing, but hung about like a vulture to swoop upon an industry which was in difficulties and which promised juicy pickings. The Cobb company had been a prize—nothing wrong with it except depression and need of immediate cash. It had taken all that Warburton possessed and had been able to borrow to push the Cobb Company into the precipice, but its tangible assets were great and after he had floated the new securities he could pay off his loans and retain control of the concern without an actual cent of cash invested.

His was a magnificent office. Outside a score of clerks and typists worked steadily. The bright young men who were his partners knew nothing of the seamy side of the firm. That was all under Warburton's hat. It looked like a powerful legitimate business enterprise, that of Warburton's, but the head of the firm took what he wanted any way he could get it and he had employees too disreputable to show their noses on lower Broadway.

EVERYTHING connected with the Cobb Corporation had seemed set. As far as the loans were concerned, the banks, knowing the situation, would not press Warburton for them until Congress had made it possible to carry on refinancing without peril to the financers. But if the Cobb Issues did not come out at the first opportunity, they'd jump the firm of Warburton and Company.

Warburton had been in possession of the Cobb Company for a month before the horrid discovery was made of the existence of a forgotten bond issue which throttled expansion. Under existing laws, ignorance was no excuse for misrepresentation. If Warburton refinanced without having secured and retired the bonds, he could be sent to jail.

There had been another six weeks in an effort to locate Steve Cobb who owned the bonds, whom Warburton had assumed to be laying low thirsting for revenge and waiting for his opportunity. There was the bright light of hope when it was found that Steve was loafing at Cobbport and that the bonds, apparently, were in his possession there.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And then Hutton, who rarely failed, had failed and disappeared. And Cobb laughed at offers to purchase his securities and impudently inaugurated an affair with the wife of the new owner of the Cobb Company.

Warburton, sitting down to dinner on the Cape, had been informed by phone that Washington had given its "O. K." and all that was necessary was his consent to the flotation of the big stock issue. It had brought him post haste to New York to hold up the business until he knew where he stood.

Unused to being thwarted, Warburton fumed as he sat at his desk. He refused to answer telephone calls and scowled at his secretaries who dared to open his door. Finally the door opened and a heavy footed, heavy jowled man with a derby hat and big hands walked into the Presence.

"Detective Sergeant Murphy from Police Headquarters," he announced.

"How in hell did you get in here and what in hell do you want?" roared the capitalist.

"I forced my way in, if you want to know," said the cop truculently. "I been waiting out there for fifteen minutes and them rabbits you have working for you was afraid to tell you I had to see you."

Warburton forced a smile. "Sorry," he said in a different tone. "I was busy and didn't want to be interrupted, but I am always at the service of the authorities."

"That's fine," grinned Sergeant Murphy. "You got a man in this office named Frank Hutton?"

"Not exactly. That is the name of one of my field men."

"Where is he now, Mr. Warburton?"

"I would like to find out," said the millionaire eagerly. "I haven't heard from him for several days."

The policeman took a big envelope from his pocket, opened it and drew forth a salt water stained wallet with the initials F.H. on it, and a mass of soggy papers.

"Some of these are visiting cards with his name and this address on them," the officer stated. "They deciphered that somehow down at headquarters."

Warburton turned slowly pale.

"What does this mean?" he asked anxiously.

"The Coast Guard boat, Tecumseh, picked up a corpse in Nantucket Sound yesterday. He was clothed, boots and all, and no water in his stomach so he must have been killed. Big bruise on his forehead. Murdered and thrown overboard from somewhere."

"Good God!"

"Hadn't been in the water more than twenty-four hours by the looks of him. Think you could identify him?"

Warburton shuddered. "I—I don't know."

"When and where did you last see him?"

"WHY—why, he was at my house at Cobbport on Cape Cod. He—er—left the house—this is Friday—it was Tuesday evening for—er—a walk. He didn't return. I notified the local chief of police that he had disappeared and asked him to make inquiries, the next day."

"Cobbport. Is that on the south side of Cape Cod?"

"Yes. On the Nantucket Sound."

"It's him all right," said Murphy with satisfaction. "Sure. They found the body off Nantucket. Think of that now!"

"It's most distressing!" said Warburton from the heart.

"It lets us out," said Murphy with satisfaction. "The feller was murdered all right, but in Massachusetts. You come with me and identify him and then we hand Massachusetts a nice murder mystery and good luck to them."

"I—I'll send a man who knows Hutton with you, Sergeant. It would be too painful to me."

"Why? You and him have a quarrel?" demanded the policeman sharply.

"No, no. Not at all. I don't want to look at a partly decomposed corpse."

Murphy's suspicion vanished. "I don't think nothing of it," he declared. "But a lot of folks are like that. How about his wife and family?"

"I believe he was a bachelor."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, his landlady, then. We need a couple of identifications."

Warburton pressed a buzzer. A young woman entered.

"Get me the address of Frank P. Hutton, please," requested the head of the firm.

In a moment she returned with an address typed on a slip of paper which she gave to her employer and which he handed to the officer.

"Murray Hill, eh?" commented Murphy. "That's a swank apartment house. This guy got money?"

"I believe he had considerable," replied Warburton, who ought to have known, since he had paid Hutton large sums from time to time.

"Have much cash on him when he disappeared?"

"I doubt if he had more than a few hundred."

"A few hundred," remarked the sergeant. "I was on Cape Cod once. From what I seen of the place a few hundred would look like a lot of dough to them codfish eaters. You going to be in town, Mr. Warburton?"

"I'm returning to Cobbport, Massachusetts, this afternoon."

"Oh, well, the Massachusetts cops will get in touch with you. How about this identifier?"

Warburton rang again. "Have Chase go with this officer to the morgue to identify a body believed to be Frank Hutton," he said. "Chase knows him quite well, Mr. Murphy. Will you go with this young lady?"

"Much obliged," said Murphy who sauntered out in the wake of the secretary.

It was very clear to William Warburton how his trouble man had met his death. He had been caught robbing the house of Stephen Cobb who had murdered him with a blow of his fist and had tossed the body into the sea.

It ought to be easy enough to pin the crime on young Cobb who would have to sell his bonds to secure funds for his defense, but Cobb didn't have to sell them to Warburton. There were half a dozen interests which would pay big money for a chance to wreck the house of William Warburton.

Cobb, after slaying Hutton, had broken into Warburton's residence, in murderous fury. The promoter thumped his desk. Diana as usual was a liar and as usual his jealousy of her had warped his judgment. Cobb, knowing that Warburton had sent Hutton to steal and murder, had come to beat William Warburton to death. He had blundered into the wrong room and Diana, with her natural complacency, had assumed he had come to pay tribute to her charms.

He rose and walked to the window. A great liner with four funnels was moving up the river. Four red funnels. Fifty thousand tons of steel. An irresistible force. That's what he'd be in the case of Steve Cobb. Crush him to powder.

No half measures. No delay. If the police arrested Cobb for murder they would ruin Warburton and Company. He put on his hat and on his way out of the office said to the girl at the information desk;

"I have an engagement which will detain me for some hours. I'll return here for a short time before taking a plane to the Cape."

CHAPTER XIII.

LUCINDA MEETS A CYNIC.

"DO you mean to tell me you are one hundred years old?" exclaimed Lucinda Warburton in a tone of awe.

General Seth Burton grinned and his white porcelains gleamed in the sunlight.

"I told you nothing of the kind," he declared. "I'm a hundred and one years old. I'm old enough to be your great-great-great-grandfather, young woman, and maybe I am, fur all I know. I was a great man with the ladies in my day."

Lucinda giggled. "You're an old sinner," she declared. "But I like you."

"Does my old eyes good to look at you," replied the General gallantly. "As purty a piece as I've seen for many a day. Who's your feller?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I haven't any particular fellow," said Lucinda meekly.

"Wall, you grab yourself one quick. Women ain't got much time." He wagged his head sagely.

Miss Warburton, who had encountered the old gentleman abusing the workmen at her beach barrier, had introduced herself and invited him within. They were now sitting on the sand getting acquainted.

"Not much time?" she said perplexedly. "We have as much time as men. Why I read somewhere that the average woman lives longer than the average man."

"Stuff and nonsense. Oh, I seen old woman that might have been ninety, but they ought to have been dead, being without their faculties. What I mean is that a woman has to catch a man quick fore she withers and dries up into an old maid. How old are you?"

"I'm twenty."

"You ought to have been married long ago. You got mebbe five years."

"Huh," she scowled ferociously and then laughed. "I suppose you were courting girls away back in 1850 when they wore hoopskirts and were afraid to say their souls were their own and married at sixteen and had sixteen children."

"They were well brought up and didn't talk back to their elders," he said significantly.

"The poor miserable things!"

"I married my first wife in 1857. She died in 1870. We had four children. I married my second wife in 1872. Lemme see. I think we had three children. My third woman come along in 1879. She was puny and didn't last long. My fourth wife —let's see, it was in Cleveland's first administration—we didn't have no children."

"I should think not—an old man like you—"

"I was only fifty. It was her fault."

Lucinda laughed derisively.

"Say," said the General complacently, "I could beget children now only I ain't interested in women for a long time. What I mean is I'm a hundred one years old and I know all about the female sex."

"You're a hundred years behind the times," Lucinda informed him. "Modern women are beautiful till they are fifty and maybe longer and they can marry any time they like, but, if they are smart, they wouldn't be annoyed with men."

"Sez you," sneered the General. "Woman is like a flower. She blooms for a brief time and traps a man and then all she's good for is to produce children."

"You're a horrid old man. You don't know anything. Since the last good looking woman spoke to you, the sex has become the equal of the male and in some respects its superior. There are women judges, congressmen and governors of States but you probably can't read and wouldn't know that."

"I bet you don't even know that women vote."

"I was opposed to that," said the General, "on account there were too many ignorant voters already."

"Women have as good an education as man. They can talk to him on any subject—"

"They always could but they didn't know nothin'," retorted the centenarian. "I've heard of these here educated woman. There was a girl I once knew that cut off her hair and wore men's clothes and was screeching about woman suffrage—lemme see, that was back in the fifties or sixties or along there—I disremember. Her name was Mary Walker. "I said to her father—'If you had took a stick to her when she was young, she'd have turned out decent, though mebbe she wouldn't.'"

"You mean Dr. Mary Walker? You mean to say you knew Dr. Mary Walker? Why she was the mother of woman suffrage."

"That's the only kind of mother she was then. Sure I knew her."

"You got lots of notions like these girls that go to college," said the General grimly. "You go get yourself a man quick as you can and have five or six children right away so he's have to scratch to feed and clothe them and won't have no time to chase younger and prettier women. That's the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only way to keep a husband. The sexes have been together for thousands of years and ain't changed any 'cept women is getting more brazen. All a woman is good for is to bring up children and that's all she'll ever be good for."

"BUT General," protested Lucinda, "haven't you heard that a girl swam the English Channel and flew an aëroplane across the Atlantic?"

"Those were old maids that were so homely they were desperate," declared the old fellow. "They only done it to catch a man. Just trying to attract attention to themselves, they were."

"You're incorrigible," she declared angrily. "I'm not trying to catch a man. I wouldn't be annoyed talking to one. I hate men."

General Burton struck at a rock with his stick and cackled sardonically.

"I'm mighty spry," he stated, "and even if I can't read the fine print of newspapers, I can see darn good and my hearing is fine. I seen you making up to Steve Cobb tother day and you was on the beach crying cause Steve wouldn't marry you, probably."

"Oh!" cried Lucinda. "Oh, you nasty, mean, contemptible old man! How dare you say I want to marry Steve Cobb. I wouldn't wipe my shoes on him. He's despicable. He's a roué and a libertine."

The old man grinned like a gnome. "That's the kind women like," he said blandly. "Heh, heh, heh. Steve's a lad after my own heart. I was a roué and a libertine and I'm proud of it."

"I was crying because I was angry—he—he was making love to my stepmother. I told him what I thought of him."

"I seen her," said the General. "I seen her like often in my time. She shakes her hips when she walks. First time I seen her come down the Street I sez to myself. 'Jezebel or Salome,' that's what I sez. Helen of Troy was like her and Cleopatra, and Lucrezia Borgia and Lola Montez. I seen Lola Montez out in California. This one is the spit and image of her. A man can tell that kind a mile away if he's a hundred years old like me. No smart man marries them. He makes love to them. Jezebel 's the only one that got her just deserts. The dogs ate her up. Don't blame Steve, though. Don't blame him at all. Now, now, baby, don't you cry. Don't listen to a ramblin' old man."

"I'm crying because I hate her so. She's breaking my father's heart. I thank you for the word, Jezebel. That's just what she is."

"The scarlet woman," said the old man gravely. He grinned queerly. "I met lots of them. One of them made me lose millions back in the nineties. Made a fool of me, but I didn't marry her. Courtesans. Lucinda, they have all the best of it. They make their mark on the sands of time, they do. Come to think of it, those kind of women are the only ones in history whose names come down to us. The good women die unsung but the scarlet women live in history."

"That's because men write histories," said Lucinda bitterly.

"Madame Pompadour, Messaline, Sappho—I'm old; I can't remember any more of them."

LUCINDA eyed him reflectively. "You are a most amazing old man," she said. "I suspect you're lying about your age, but you are remarkable. And you're right. I'm going to be a famous Courtesan."

"No," said the General. "You ain't the type. Mostly they have red hair and they all have the devil in them. You're a good woman type. You grab yourself a husband."

"What kind of a man is Steve Cobb, really?" demanded Lucinda.

"A fine boy. Just like me at his age."

"Hump. Judging by your confession, you were pretty rotten. Four or five wives and lots of mistresses, no doubt."

"I," said the General proudly, "was a man. I was a soldier and a general, and I fit Indians and, when I saw a woman I wanted, I got her." His mood changed. "And what good did it do? Peace is what

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a man really needs. Communion with the waves and the wind and the good earth. I'll speak to Steve about you. He might do worse."

"You will, will you?" cried Lucinda, shaking her fist at him. "Don't you dare. If you mention my name to that big idiot, I'll see that you don't live to be a hundred and two."

To her astonishment the old man seemed to crumple and his face was distorted with fear. He lifted his left arm as if to protect his face.

"No, no," he croaked. "You wouldn't hurt a poor old man. I got to live to be a hundred and two. I—I'm afraid to die."

Lucinda stared at him, filled with pity. After all, despite his amazing lucidity, he was a wretched, doddering creature who had lived a quarter of a century too long.

"I wouldn't hurt you, grandfather, for the world," she said soothingly. "I love you, really I do. I think you'll live to be a hundred fifty."

He laughed, a senile laugh. "Certainly I will," he mumbled. "I'll be the oldest man that ever lived."

She helped him to his feet and conducted him across the barrier, and then with the light of battle in her eye turned toward her home.

"I'm going to have an understanding with that Jezebel," she said aloud through clenched teeth.

CHAPTER XIV.

MYRA GOES THROUGH A WINDOW.

MR. AND MRS. BEN SEARS were entertaining visitors in their cottage in Cobbport. The hour was eight in the evening. The Sears had just had their supper which consisted of boiled eggs, borrowed from Steve Cobb, fried fish caught by Ben, hot biscuits, flour lent by Steve Cobb, and tea with cream which Myra had brought home from a visit to Steve early in the evening.

Ben Sears was "on the relief," being a member of the unemployed—permanently unemployed—but he was saying at supper that the New Deal didn't go far enough. Nothing short of an equal distribution among the population of the nation's wealth would suit him, he declared. There ought to be a law against people like Warburton who lived in luxury while decent people couldn't make a living. The Cobbs had been just as bad. He, for one, thought Steve Cobb was getting his just desserts in being broke and having to earn a living like other people. Mr. Sears was talkative because he had a new gallon jug of gin.

As Mrs. Sears pointed out to him frequently enough, they wouldn't have to borrow the necessities of life from their neighbors if Ben would bring home the relief money instead of spending it for liquor. Myra ate silently, occasionally gazing upon her father with a frown of intense dislike.

Ben was a slab-sided, lantern-jawed, vacant-eyed man of forty-five who had the Cape Cod equivalent of the Southern hook worm. He was too lazy to go fishing until the larder was completely empty. He affected lumbago when it was desirable to dig a mess of clams. Mostly he spent his days in the shade with several other residents of Cobbport who had anarchistic tendencies.

Mrs. Sears was a very thin, very angular woman with an unattractive face and a disposition which, from years of living with Ben, had soured. She was taciturn by nature. Her ambition was to save enough money to buy a new dress. Myra, who was pretty as a picture, believed, privately, that she didn't belong to these people. She had built up quite a romance about having been stolen from charming and loving parents shortly after birth. Some day, these people who really owned her would drive up in a sixteen cylinder car and take her away from the Ben Sears. Or else Steve Cobb would make a lot of money and marry her, when she got old enough.

Upon the family circle there had intruded without warning Eben Cobb, the Cobbport chief of police, and a round red-faced Irishman introduced as Mr. Noonan,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who was a Massachusetts state detective, and who had big hands and feet and a harsh voice, but Myra thought, rather a nice twinkle in his small blue eyes.

Ben Sears, aware of numerous small peculations which might have come home to roost, turned gray when the officers entered, but it was Myra they came to see, not her father.

"Myra," said the Chief, "I want you to tell Mr. Noonan what you told me 'bout Steve Cobb."

Myra grew very white. "Steve hasn't done anything," she protested.

"I ain't said he has," replied the Chief. "It's about the other night when you thought you saw a burglar in his house."

"Why don't you talk to Steve?" she demanded.

"He ain't to home so we come over here, being as Mr. Noonan is in a hurry."

"Well," said Myra, "I was looking out my window and I thought I saw a light in his place and I knew Steve was sleeping out."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Noonan. "And why does he sleep out?"

"'Cause he likes the open air to sleep in."

"You went up on the hummock where he was asleep and woke him up," prodded the Chief.

SHE nodded dubiously. "And Steve sent me home and that's all I know about it."

"You told me different," declared the Chief.

"Look-a-here, Myra," said her father pompously. "You speak right out. I always thought there was something queer about Steve Cobb."

Mrs. Sears opened her mouth. "Because he's just about fed us for months," she sneered. "Steve's all right and you ought to be ashamed to make insinuations, Ben Sears."

"Steve went down to his house and you sneaked along after him. You heard voices and what sounded like a rumpus, eh?" demanded Eben.

"I was so scared I didn't know what I heard," said Myra, who sensed danger to her hero.

"Then what made you tell me them things?" demanded Eben angrily.

"Don't you talk like that to my daughter!" exclaimed Ben Sears. "Who do you think you are, anyway, you and your tin badge? Go back to your souvenir store and don't come bargin' into the homes of respectable citizens. This is a free country."

"Pipe down," said Noonan harshly. "I'll do the questioning. Now, young woman—"

"Don't you say a word without advice of counsel," shouted her father. "I guess I know my rights."

"Shucks," said Mrs. Sears dryly. "You tell the officers anything you know, Myra. You ain't done anything and neither has Steve Cobb."

"Well," said Myra, "I went over to find out what happened and Steve said there was nobody there and nothing had happened."

"Did you look into the house?" demanded Noonan.

She shook her head. "It was dark. He wouldn't let me come in because it was late so it wasn't proper."

"I demand to know the purpose of this inquiry," this from the head of the family.

"I don't mind telling you," said Noonan. "A murder has been committed."

"Ooooh," moaned Myra who fell off her chair in a faint. Her father and mother picked her up and carried her into the bedroom.

"She'll be all right," said Noonan who followed them to the bedroom door. "Leave her lay there. I want some words with you, Mr. Sears."

Mrs. Sears closed the bedroom door and went back to the supper table. The detective reseated himself. Sears folded his arms and struck an attitude.

In the dark of the bedroom, Myra lifted her head from her pillow, planted her feet on the floor and in a second she was through the window and departing from her house at high speed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A glance told her that Steve's hut was dark. It was too early for him to have gone off with his blanket, so she thought she knew where he was to be found. She went swiftly down to the village. At the farther end of Main Street was the library reading-room, a one-story, three-room house where Steve often spent an evening, glancing over the Boston and New York newspapers.

Looking through the open window, she saw him. He was wearing white duck pants, a sweater and sneakers and he was reading a newspaper. There was nobody else in the reading-room and the librarian was in the other room with her back turned.

"Psst, Steve," she called. He looked up.

"Hello, Princess," he said with his cheerful grin.

"Quick, come out. Something awful has happened."

Steve rose, crossed the room, went out through the door and met her in the street.

"STEVE, do you know anything about a murder?" she demanded tensely.

"Which one? The papers are full of them."

"Down here. That awful Eben Cobb is up there at my house with a State cop and they're asking me all about the night I thought I saw a burglar in your place. When they said there was a murder I fainted, and they put me in my room and I went right out through the window."

"I take it that it was a fake faint," remarked Steve.

"Sure. I had to warn you, didn't I?"

"You precious kid. Do they want to see me?"

"Yes, but I came to warn you to flee for your life."

"I wouldn't think of it, Myra."

She grasped his hand. "Steve, you wouldn't murder anybody, would you?"

"I'm not crazy about the idea," he said.

"Don't worry, Myra. A man named Hutton has disappeared and he was asking for me around the village. I had it all out with Eben, but he must have notified the State police."

"Steve," she said in a frightened tone, "I saw lights in your house and I heard noises and voices. There was somebody there."

"Well, you tell the truth, dear, no matter what happens."

"I said I thought I did," she replied. "That's all I'm going to tell 'em."

He took her hand. "Well, let's go beard the lions, Princess. You and I have clean consciences and right is on our side. You didn't hear voices. You were terribly excited and you thought you did."

"I didn't hear anything," said Myra staunchly. "Oh, Steve, what happened?"

"Nothing of any consequence," he said lightly. "Nothing that bothers me in the slightest degree."

He took the child's hand which was shaking.

"Snap out of it, Myra," he pleaded. "You act guilty."

"I'm so 'fraid for you, Steve. That Mr. Noonan has awful sharp eyes. Did you—did you—"

"My conscience is as clear as a glass of water, dear. You go home, sneak back into your room and I'll light my lamp. When they see the light in my house they'll call on me."

"Well, I s'pose it's all right if you say so."

However, when the pair turned into the lane leading toward the residences of both Steve and Myra, they encountered the officers coming down the narrow road.

"That's him," cried Eben excitedly. "She went and warned him, just as I said."

"That makes her accessory after the fact."

CHAPTER XV.

AN ARREST AND A RESCUE.

"EBEN," said Steve sternly, "another crack like that and I'll pull your whiskers out by the roots. Go home, Myra, and let me talk to these people. Scamper, now."

"Your name Stephen Cobb?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Sure. What's yours?" said Steve cheerfully.

"William Noonan, Massachusetts State officer. I've business with you."

"Come up to my humble home," requested Cobb. "You can come, too, Eben. Go to bed, Myra."

"Look here, Steve Cobb, I'm Chief of Police of this here town and don't you forget it. You can't threaten me with impunity, you can't," blustered Eben Cobb. "Myra, you go home and stay there. We got to ask you more questions and you better not pretend to faint next time."

Myra was weeping. Steve patted her shoulder kindly and pushed her along the lane ahead of him. Noonan fell into step by his side.

"Don't you be frightened, little girl," the officer said kindly. "We won't bother you any more."

Leading the way into his domicile, Steve lighted the lamp and invited his visitors to seat themselves.

Myra lingered a short distance away, but, hearing no disturbance within, finally trotted homeward.

"You're the fellow who was a champion weight lifter and hammer thrower and wrestler and boxer in college," said Noonan, who eyed Cobb's proportions admiringly. "You're the son of Ezra Cobb who owned the Cobb Company."

"I wasn't a champion in all those events," said Steve modestly, "but I was pretty good. And my father was Ezra Cobb."

"You could kill a man with a blow of your fist, I expect," said the officer thoughtfully.

"Oh, I'm mild and gentle as a lamb," replied Steve. "What's the cause of this visitation?"

"We're trying to find out who murdered Frank Hutton."

Steve lifted his eyebrows. "Eben told me that a man named Hutton had disappeared. Was he murdered?"

"He was."

Steve felt a gripe in his stomach, but his face did not betray his feeling.

"We have good reason to believe that Hutton called on you the night of his death."

"Indeed!"

"We know you had a fracas with somebody up here that night."

"You seem to be well-informed," said Steve dryly.

"Suppose you make a clean breast of it?" suggested the detective.

"You make me laugh," retorted Steve.

"Okay, feller. Hutton was sent to see you by Mr. Warburton, who is now owner of the Cobb Company, on some business matter. Hutton inquired of a man at the gas station where you lived. The Sears girl saw a light in your house. She went up on that hill back there and woke you up. You came down to investigate. The girl heard voices and a rumpus. She came to the door. The light was out and you told her that nobody had been here."

"Yes, I told her that. She was sure there was a burglar. She was excited. I sent her home to bed."

"Next day the Chief came up here. He found, in your ash barrel, broken glass and articles which had been smashed in this fight. He found a bullet imbedded in your frame."

"He told me all that."

"Yet you say there was nobody here."

"I don't own a revolver, Mr. Noonan. A shot would awaken the town. That bullet may have been in the doorframe for years."

"No, it was recent. I examined the hole. It was clean and new. Things look bad for you, Cobb."

"Look here," said Steve earnestly. "I have no money and no valuables. This hut speaks for itself. I didn't know this Hutton. I would have no reason to attack him. It would amuse me to find a burglar in this place. And, as Hutton seems to be a friend of Warburton's, it's most unlikely that he would rob my house."

"Hutton was killed by a terrific blow on the temple such as a man of your strength could deliver," said Noonan.

"But what would be my motive?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The motive will turn up."

"May I ask, if this man has disappeared, how you know he was killed at all and particularly how you know the manner in which he was killed?"

"Because we have the body," said Noonan quietly. Steve's eyes almost stuck out of his head and his mouth opened.

"I—I don't believe you," he muttered.

"No, of course you don't. And why? Because you threw him into the sea," shouted Noonan who whipped a revolver from his pocket and covered Steve Cobb with it. "And the revenue boat, Tecumseh, picked him up. Oh, we have the body and there ain't any doubt in the world we have the murderer.

"Here, Chief," he added, as he fished with his left hand a pair of handcuffs from his pocket. "Put these bracelets on him."

STEVE rose. Standing four feet from the table he blew out the lamp, plunging the room into darkness. He dropped flat as a bullet tore out of the gun and whined above him.

"Grab him," shouted Eben Cobb. Steve's big arm shot out, grasped the Chief by both knees, and pulled him over. Noonan came charging like a bull afraid to fire in the dark for fear of hitting his fellow officer. Steve crouched on his knees, caught the detective, as he came in, with a back breaking grip about the middle, dodged a blow with the butt of the gun and tore it from his hand, tossed it to a corner of the room and came back to sanity.

"All right, boys," he said. "I'll light the lamp. I just don't let any darn fool pull a gun on me. I surrender voluntarily. You haven't a damn thing on me and you know it."

"Now you're talking sense, confound you," mumbled Noonan. "Where's my gun?"

Steve was up and fumbling for matches. He had hurled Noonan in the direction of the couch. He had been shocked out of his self-control when informed that the body of Hutton had been picked up and, for a second, had yielded to the natural impulse of the guilty man to make his get-away. But he'd have to fight this thing, tell the truth and hope he would persuade a jury that his homicide was justifiable.

"This won't do you any good, you know," growled Noonan. "Eh?"

For the room was suddenly filled with men. They were outlined as they plunged through the doorway, four or five of them. A flashlight covered Steve Cobb with golden rays, blinding him momentarily. It showed Noonan on his feet at the sofa, Eben Cobb still crouching on the floor.

"Grab the big fellow," cried somebody hoarsely. "Hands up, you others."

And Steve's fury burst again. He couldn't resist the law, but he found men in front of him upon whom he could vent the despair and rage and self-contempt with which he was filled. With a roar, he plunged at the holder of the flashlight which immediately went out. And for a minute or two there raged a battle royal in the dark in which fists and feet whirled and struck flesh; in which there were grunts and curses and heavy breathing. Noonan was in the fray, both arms swinging like flails, and Steve's huge fists were crashing against chests and faces. In the narrow precincts it was impossible for a fist to miss a target. Once Steve received a crushing blow on the shoulder from a blackjack.

"Crack."

There was a sharp report from a revolver and a groan. In the illumination afforded by the gun flash, Steve floored the man who had fired it. And then something heavy descended upon his head.

"Got him," said a triumphant voice. "Let's go. Pick him up and carry him."

Fighting ceased. Four men lifted the heavy weight which was Steve Cobb and bore him out of the house and down the lane.

They encountered no one.

At the foot of the lane stood an open touring car, a chauffeur behind the wheel. They dropped the body of Steve Cobb in the bottom of the tonneau and piled in."

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Argonotes

The Readers' Viewpoint

ABOUT George Bruce's story of the U. S. Marines, in this issue:

As you will probably understand when you read it, "Tomorrow We Die" was written because I had to write it. The two characters who move through the story are still living, and they are still in the Marine Corps. *Strong* is now a captain, and just about the most decorated man in the Corps; and *Garrity* is a sergeant serving under *Strong*. *Garrity* had his commission revoked for taking a punch at an officer who suggested that *Captain Strong* should not wear more decorations than his *colonel*. This little interlude took place in Santo Domingo, after the war. But *Garrity* said: "Aw, it was too damned much trouble bein' an officer. It wasn't so bad during the war, but after that, when bein' an officer was just a business of bein' able to hold a teacup on one knee, a chicken sandwich on the other, a knife and fork and spoon, a block of ice cream, and a coffee cup—without even sittin' down on nothin'—that got me down. What the hell! I'd rather live in the barracks anyhow."—That's what he told me, and the funny thing is he was telling the truth.

GEORGE BRUCE.

BEDFORD-JONES offers an explanation:

In his novelette, "Free-Lance Spy," Mr. Bedford-Jones had his hero, *Mr. Barnes,* save Abyssinia from the Italian schemes of conquest. How is this to be reconciled with the fact that Italy seems to be going ahead to grab Abyssinia? I'd like to know how your know-it-all author can get around this.

H. E. TWINELLS.

Your query is natural. But if you read that story carefully you undoubtedly noted that *Barnes* was skeptical about the possibility of checking the Italian ambitions. He stated, "It'll take more than a treaty to stop Mussolini. If he isn't stopped, then I'm going to open a private war on him for double-crossing me." And as I write this, Mr. Twinells, a cable from *Barnes* informs me that he has fulfilled his threat. I'll have details later, and they will appear in ARGOSY, if *Barnes* consents. As I'm going to Italy this summer, I have to be somewhat careful on my own account as to just what goes into these stories. Hence I can't make any promises.

One further point. You must reflect that several months elapse between the receiving of information from *Barnes,* the writing of the stories, and their publication.

H. BEDFORD-JONES.

HE waves ARGOSY'S flag:

Sedalia, Mo.

First, in order to establish my right to criticize or flatter your magazine, let me tell you that I have spent more than $100.00 in buying it, and

WHAT is *your* idea of the best story (of any length, from short story to serial) published in ARGOSY since January 1, 1935? For the twelve post cards or letters from readers which, in the opinion of the editors, give the best reasons why this or that story stands out above all others, the magazine will reward the letter-writers with twelve full, yearly subscriptions. We don't want mere praise; we are interested in finding out exactly what stories you like best. Nor do we care about your literary style or skill. If there is some story that you liked so much that it stands out in your memory above all others, that is the story we want you to tell us about. It isn't necessary for you to read every story published in ARGOSY. You will have just as good a chance to win one of those twelve subscriptions if you read six of the stories published as you would if you read them all. But we must know *why* you liked the story you choose as best.

Letters selected by the editors will be published from week to week, ***but not all letters published will receive subscriptions.***

Make your comments as long or as short as you wish, for mere length will not be considered. Put down all your reasons, however. Then address your letter to The Editor, ARGOSY Magazine, 280 Broadway, New York City, so that it will reach us not later than August 1st, 1935.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than 5,000 hours in reading it. I've shed 9,000 tears, laughed 14,961 times, fainted 14 times, and been accused of stealing from friends several issues which I could not find on the news-stands. I've visited every country on the globe (between ARGOSY'S pages) and nearly every planet. I've sailed the seven seas into every seaport on earth, where I have met every nationality. I've lived a thousand years hence, and I've seen George Washington resurrected from his grave. Your stories have made me love and hate; I've been mad and sad, happy, doubtful, astonished, awed, frightened —and sick. The last time I fainted, it took four doctors, three nurses, and five days to bring me back to my senses, for I had just read "Creep, Shadow!" In view of these facts, I believe you will agree with me that I'm fully qualified to express my opinion of your magazine. I think it is the finest, the most interesting, the most novel story magazine that can be bought on American news-stands.

The serial, "Captain Long Knife," I vote as your best novel of 1934. I believe it is as fine a story as "The Covered Wagon," for it portrays in vivid reality the lives and adventures of Western characters during the era when railroads were being built into far places. The reader can almost feel that he is living in that colorful period. Mr. Mason certainly has something to be proud of in this story, and I prophesy that it will soon be sold in book form. May the flag at ARGOSY'S mast long wave over the land of the free!

N. H. FISHER.

PRAISE for Allan Vaughan Elston:

Roswell, N. M.

The dictionary defines ARGOSY as "a large, richly freighted merchant vessel"—and it has proven so for me. I commenced my first magazine reading with the *Golden Argosy* (when I was quite a small girl). I have read the magazine in all its forms ever since.

To ask one to name the best story in the 1934 ARGOSY is a large order, as it has so many brilliant and interesting writers; but I believe my choice is the "Thief of Taos," by Allan Vaughan Elston, because of its background and plot.—We have camped in the mountains around Taos; those mountains with beautiful canyons and their ever changing lights and shadows. They are an inspiration, and it is no wonder that artists from all over the country are drawn to Taos. Elston's story seemed so plausible; he pictured so naturally and logically the way in which an ambitious and unscrupulous artist might even commit murder in order to maintain his superiority over other artists and to gratify his pride and amity.

(MRS.) ANNIE LISLE DUCK.

LOOKING AHEAD!

ALCATRAZ BOUND

It's a lucky break for any prisoner, when his ship is unexpectedly wrecked on a lonely Pacific Island—until . . .

A long novelette by
EUSTACE L. ADAMS

IMPERIAL SHADOWS

An important Allied official marked for death by the most dangerous spies in all Europe; a plan which *Captain Fox Elton,* Master Spy, hoped to foil.

A novelette by
ARED WHITE

THE POLAR LIGHT

Is it possible that such things will happen in the year 1979? The strangest of dramas—with the North Pole as its setting.

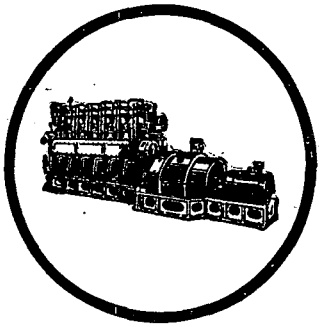
A novelette by
RAY CUMMINGS

ALL THIS—AND MORE—COMING TO YOU IN NEXT WEEK'S ARGOSY—APRIL 13

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DIESEL POWER

A COMING AMERICAN INDUSTRY



THE internal-combustion engine represents man's supreme triumph of machine power. Diesel engineers are in great demand. Many are acquiring necessary knowledge through spare-time study of this modern I. C. S. Course on Diesel engines. Free booklet!

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING ● MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

—A Great Industry with a Great Future

The new course in Electrical Engineering covers this fascinating field thoroughly. If you are just starting or are partly on the way to a real paying position in this industry, this new course brings the broader knowledge necessary for advancement. The coupon brings complete information.

—A Field with a Future

This course has meant advancement to hundreds of ambitious men, mechanics, draftsmen, blacksmiths, foundrymen, patternmakers, apprentices, and mechanical engineers—men who wanted to get ahead and to earn more money. You will find, as they have found, that enrolling for an I. C. S. Course is an investment in a Bigger Future.

AUTOMOBILE EXPERTS

are always in demand

The rapid progress in manufacture and service of the modern automobile brings new opportunities to thousands of ambitious and forward-looking men. There's always a demand for trained men. The new I. C. S. Automobile Course will make you a trained man! The time to act is now.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

"The Universal University" BOX 2172-F, SCRANTON, PENNA.

★ Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject *before* which I have marked X: ★

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Architect
☐ Architectural Draftsman
☐ Building Estimating
☐ Wood Millworking
☐ Contractor and Builder
☐ Structural Draftsman
☐ Structural Engineer
☐ Development and Protection of New Products
☐ Electrical Engineer
☐ Electric Lighting
☐ Welding, Electric and Gas
☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
☐ Telegraph Engineer
☐ Telephone Work
☐ Mechanical Engineer
☐ Mechanical Draftsman
☐ Machinist ☐ Toolmaker
☐ Patternmaker
☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
☐ Bridge Engineer
☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
☐ Gas Engines ☐ Diesel Engines
☐ Aviation Engines
☐ Automobile Mechanic
☐ Plumbing ☐ Steam Fitting
☐ Heating ☐ Ventilation
☐ Sheet Metal Worker
☐ Steam Engineer ☐ Civil Engineer
☐ Steam Electric Engineer
☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ Refrigeration
☐ R. R. Locomotives
☐ R. R. Section Foreman
☐ R. R. Bridge and Building Foreman
☐ Air Brakes ☐ R. R. Signalman
☐ Highway Engineering
☐ Chemistry ☐ Pharmacy
☐ Coal Mining Engineer
☐ Navigation ☐ Air Conditioning
☐ Boilermaker
☐ Textile Overseer or Supt.
☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Woolen Manufacturing
☐ Agriculture ☐ Fruit Growing
☐ Poultry Farming ☐ Radio
☐ Marine Engineer

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

☐ Business Management
☐ Office Management
☐ Industrial Management
☐ Traffic Management
☐ Accountancy
☐ Cost Accountant
☐ C. P. Accountant
☐ Bookkeeping
☐ Secretarial Work
☐ Spanish ☐ French
☐ Salesmanship
☐ Advertising
☐ Service Station Salesmanship
☐ First Year College
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Lettering Show Cards ☐ Signs
☐ Stenography and Typing
☐ Civil Service ☐ Mail Carrier
☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ Grade School Subjects
☐ High School Subjects
☐ College Preparatory
☐ Illustrating
☐ Cartooning

Name.....*Age*.....*Address*.....

City.....*State*.....*Occupation*.....

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW LOW PRICES

GOODYEAR Firestone-Goodrich U.S. AND OTHER TIRES

$2.15 29x4.40-21

$2.45 28-4.75-19

SAVE ON TIRES NOW

Why Pay High Prices for Tires?

Save money on all standard brands, reconstructed by the special Adamite scientific process. Adams tires are fully guaranteed to give best of service under severest road conditions for 12 full months and are backed by the vast financial resources of this well-known company. Now is the time to buy, before prices advance.

BALLOON TIRES

Size Rim	Tire	Tube
29x4.40-21	$2.15	$0.85
29x4.50-20	2.35	0.85
30x4.50-21	2.40	0.85
28x4.75-19	2.45	0.95
29x4.75-20	2.50	0.95
29x5.00-19	2.85	1.05
30x5.00-20	2.85	1.05
28x5.25-18	2.90	1.15
29x5.25-19	2.95	1.15
30x5.25-20	2.95	1.15
31x5.25-21	3.25	1.15
28x5.50-18	3.35	1.15
29x5.50-19	3.35	1.15
30x6.00-18	3.40	1.15
31x6.00-19	3.40	1.15
32x6.00-20	3.45	1.25
33x6.00-21	3.65	1.25
31x6.50-19	3.60	1.35
32x6.50-20	3.75	1.35
34x7.00-20	4.60	1.65
35x7.00-21	4.60	1.65

DEALERS WANTED

CORD TIRES

Size	Tire	Tube
30x3	$2.25	$0.65
30x3½	2.35	0.75
31x4	2.95	0.85
32x4	2.95	0.85
33x4	2.95	0.85
34x4	3.25	0.85
32x4½	3.35	1.15
33x4½	3.45	1.15
34x4½	3.45	1.15
30x5	3.65	1.35
33x5	3.75	1.45
35x5	3.95	1.55

Heavy Duty TRUCK TIRES

Size	Tire	Tube
30x5	$4.25	$1.95
32x6	7.95	2.75
36x6	9.95	3.95
34x7	10.95	3.95
38x7	10.95	3.95
36x8	12.45	4.25
40x8	15.95	4.95

Heavy Duty Truck Balloons

Size	Tire	Tube
7.50-20	$6.95	$3.75
8.25-20	8.95	4.95
9.00-20	10.95	5.65
9.75-20	13.95	6.45

ALL OTHER SIZES

12 MONTH WRITTEN GUARANTY BOND WITH EACH TIRE

ALL TUBES GUARANTEED BRAND NEW

HOW TO ORDER

Send $1 deposit with each tire ordered ($4 with each Truck Tire.) Balance C.O.D.

If you send cash in full deduct 5%.

Remember — *12 months' guaranteed* service or replacement at half price.

ADAMS TIRE & RUBBER CO., Dept. E-56

2515 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois

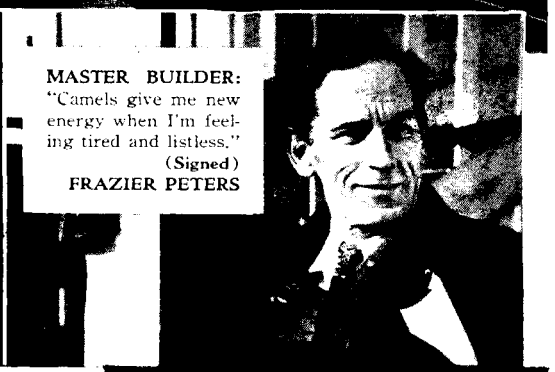
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPEAKING OF BOB-SLED RACING, Ray Stevens says: "When the last heat has been run, it's mighty comforting to light up a Camel. The fatigue and 'let-down' feeling fade away."

(Signed) RAYMOND F. STEVENS
North American Bob-Sled Champion

"CAMELS RESTORE my 'pep' when I've used up my energy." (Signed) JACK SHEA
Olympic Champion
Speed Skater

MASTER BUILDER: "Camels give me new energy when I'm feeling tired and listless."
(Signed)
FRAZIER PETERS



COLLEGE GIRL: "When I'm tired, a Camel makes me feel fresher, more alert." (Signed) MARGUERITE OSMUN

LISTEN IN ♫

Walter O'Keefe, Annette Hanshaw, Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra over coast-to-coast WABC-Columbia Network.

TUESDAY	10:00 p.m.	E.S.T.
	9:00 p.m.	C.S.T.
	8:00 p.m.	M.S.T.
	7:00 p.m.	P.S.T.
THURSDAY	9:00 p.m.	E.S.T.
	8:00 p.m.	C.S.T.
	9:30 p.m.	M.S.T.
	8:30 p.m.	P.S.T.

MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS IN CAMELS..

"Camels are made from finer, MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS — Turkish and Domestic — than any other popular brand."

Signed
R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Camel's Costlier Tobaccos never get on your Nerves!

Copyright, 1935
R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company
Winston-Salem, N. C.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED